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THE LIFE

OF

FIELD-MARSHAL

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ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

SS. B. 1

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ARTHUR, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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ALL the next day the Prussians continued their pursuit of the French, and Blucher advanced his head-quarters as far as Gosselies; but Wellington, who at daybreak had repaired to Brussels, did not move his troops further than Nivelles, where he himself arrived in the course of the evening; and where the next day he issued a general order to them, enjoining them, as they were on the point of entering the French territory, to recollect that their respective sovereigns were the allies of the King of France, and that they were therefore to treat France as a friendly country. He was thoroughly convinced in his own mind that the re-establishment of Louis XVIII. afforded the only probability of permanent peace, and he therefore without scruple took upon himself the adoption of such measures as might render that measure inevitable. On his own responsibility he wrote

at once to the Duc de Berri to urge that prince to join him with the troops under his command, and he also pressed Louis to leave Ghent and enter his own dominions, judging that such a step would have an effect throughout the kingdom, and especially at Paris, very favourable to his interests; and proposing to him for the present to fix his court at Courtray, or at any other town of importance which might be first recovered. When the King on the 24th arrived at Cateau Cambrésis, where the British head-quarters were on that day, Wellington went forth with a splendid staff to escort him into the town; and though he was aware that Blucher and the other Prussian generals had avoided any expression of their sentiments with respect to the King's restoration, and that there were no light grounds for doubting the favour with which the Emperor of Russia would regard it, he had the address to procure the company of General Müffling and also of Pozzo di Borgo, a general in the Russian service, in attendance upon himself, and so to give to Louis's entry into France in some degree the appearance of taking place under the sanction of both those powers as well as of Great Britain.*

He now proceeded rapidly in his victorious progress towards Paris. The governor of Valenciennes made an attempt to arrest it by transmitting to him the proclamation which Napoleon had issued on the 22nd, in which he abdicated the throne in favour of his son, and requesting in consequence a suspension of hostilities. But Wellington considered that, even if the proclamation were genuine, of which he had great doubts, the substitution of the son's authority for that of the father would not satisfy the allies; and he therefore refused to grant an armistice, though he did not consider it his

* Müffling, p. 261.

duty to hinder the envoys, who had been sent by a Provisional Government which had been formed at Paris as a kind of Regency, from proceeding to the Rhine to discuss the subject with the Emperors of Austria and Russia.

While waiting at Cateau Cambrésis for King Louis, he crossed over to Catillon, to confer with Blucher; and as it was understood that Soult and Grouchy were rallying their broken forces in the neighbourhood of Laon, he arranged with the Prussians that they themselves should take a more northern line, so as to turn the left of those marshals and get between them and Paris: with this view he pushed rapidly forward. He had summoned the governor of Cambray to surrender the town to Louis as his lawful King, inviting him and his garrison to enter Louis' service, to which he undertook to recommend him; but as the governor rejected his offers, he attacked the outworks, carried them by escalade, and the town surrendered, though the citadel held out till the next day. The next place that he attacked was Peronne, familiar to English readers as the scene of the interview between Louis XI. and Charles of Burgundy;* and celebrated throughout France as the virgin fortress which had never seen a conqueror or an enemy within its walls: that boast was no more to be repeated; the British soldiers stormed its principal outwork, and the governor, seeing that all resistance was unavailing, yielded up the fortress.

Müffling, who was still accompanying Wellington, has recorded the admiring surprise with which he witnessed the rapidity of the British General's conceptions, and the minute precision of all his arrangements for the reduction of these places, previously considered almost impregnable. And indeed this and every other labour fell wholly upon Wellington himself. He had complained of his staff

* Quentin Durward.

before Waterloo, and he daily found it worse than he had at first thought it. He declared that "he believed it to "be the worst that was ever brought together. Some "knew no more of their business than children, and he "was obliged to do it for them;" others, in spite of all his trouble, "would not do what he ordered them." Some of the regiments were reduced to nothing by their losses in the field, and the want of adequate means of conveyance caused him constant difficulty and annoyance.

He had other vexations from the conduct of the Prussians, whom Blücher allowed, if indeed it may not be said encouraged, to treat the inhabitants of the country with lawless severity. The Prussian marshal, too mindful of the injuries that his country had suffered from the French, had no idea of looking upon France as a friendly country, and his soldiers fully shared his feeling that no outrages which they could commit could possibly exceed the bounds of a just retaliation. But the more they gave way to such a spirit, the more resolute was Wellington that it should not infect his troops. A Belgian division, the very same that had behaved so shamefully at Waterloo, began to emulate the violence of the Prussians; and Wellington immediately adopted towards them the same measures which he had found effectual in Spain, ordering the roll to be called for both officers and soldiers every hour; and sending some of the officers in arrest to the Hague with an indignant letter, declaring that he had no desire to command troops such as they had proved themselves, that he had long known that pillagers were of no use before the enemy, and that he wished to have none such in his army.

Under their system the Prussians were proceeding more rapidly than he, who from the beginning had prohibited his troops from behaving in any different manner

from that to which they were accustomed in their own respective countries. Müffling, eager to reach Paris, pressed him in vain to allow his army to keep pace with Blucher's. But he replied that he could not outstrip his supplies, that if he should do so, the maintenance of order would become impracticable, and that it was far better to reach Paris a day or two later than to permit the slightest relaxation of discipline.

By the 28th he had advanced as far as Orville, and here his attention was demanded by very opposite propositions respecting the disposal of Napoleon himself. The commissioners established at Paris as the temporary government sent some agents to him, who, besides treating for a suspension of arms, were commissioned also to solicit a passport for their late Emperor to retire to America, which he refused at once, stating that he had no power to give it, and that the Government had better surrender him to the allies.* This was a step of which, naturally enough, they rejected the idea, but when they added that, since the passport was refused, the Emperor would escape from Rochefort without one, he quietly replied that he would find that impossible, as our frigates would take him and convey him to England as a prisoner. The other proposal came from Blücher, who was still more desirous to have Napoleon in his power, with the view of wreaking his revenge upon his person; and who now desired Müffling to announce to Wellington,† that, as the Congress of Vienna had declared Napoleon an outlaw, it was his intention whenever he caught him to shoot him at Vincennes on the spot on which the Duc d'Enghien had been put to death, and he desired to know the Duke's views on the subject, that they might act in concert. Wellington stared at the Prussian general with

* Romilly's 'Memoirs,' vol. iii., app. 418. † Muffling, 252.

undisguised amazement as he delivered his strange message, and in the first place renewed his denial that the declaration issued at Vienna could bear any such interpretation, or could authorize any such action; he also disputed the right of either power singly to dispose of Napoleon; and he wrote himself to Blucher, arguing against his design on the score of propriety (even supposing the right and power of putting Napoleon to death to be granted), telling him that "they had both acted "too distinguished a part in the recent transactions to "become executioners," and expressing his own determination at all events not to become one himself. Blucher and his advisers called the Duke's scruples "theatrical "magnanimity," but yielded to them, though they declared that by so doing they should deserve the reproaches of all the people of Europe for neglecting so imperative a duty; of which neglect the Duke, they said, must bear the whole responsibility. He did not shrink from heavier responsibilities than this, and, secure in the confidence of his own Government, conducted affairs at this time solely according to his own views of what was right and politic, without any superfluous consideration for the opinions of his allies, of whose capacity and good feeling he entertained no very high opinion, though he treated them with great apparent deference, and on all occasions with the most conciliatory courtesy.

The agents from the French government, though the suspension of arms was refused, continued at his headquarters till he arrived in front of Paris; and though he avoided anything which could bear the appearance of any official negotiation with them, he held frequent conversations with them, in the progress of which they were greatly gratified by the frank and cordial confidence with which he treated them, and opened to them his views

with respect to the future government and well-being of their country. They sounded him in every possible way; but his frankness was more than a match for all their diplomatic subtleties. He told them candidly that he had no authority to make arrangements with them for the future government of their country; but when they asked him for his own opinion, he did not scruple to give it, nor to add that he should do all in his power to induce the allies to adopt it; and that was, that "the "establishment of any other government than that of "Louis XVIII. must inevitably lead to new and endless "wars, and that therefore the best security for Europe "was the restoration of the King. That it would be a "more dignified proceeding on the part of the French "nation to recall Louis without conditions, and to trust "to the energy of their constitution for any reforms "which they might wish to make. And that, above all, "it was important that they should recall him without "loss of time, so as to avoid the appearance of the "measure having been forced upon them by the allies." The practical wisdom of these suggestions was sufficiently manifest, and he did not scruple to add, as an inducement to the French commissioners to adopt them, a statement of his own belief, which before the end of the conference was fully confirmed by a declaration issued by Louis, that moderate and constitutional plans for the future government of the kingdom had been already formed by the King; that he designed to govern by a responsible ministry, and was likely even to allow the parliamentary assemblies the initiative in framing and introducing laws.

It was in reality in compliance with his own earnest recommendation that Louis had published that declaration; but this fact the Duke kept to himself, wishing that the King should obtain among his subjects the

credit of having spontaneously come forward with so well-judged and welcome an act of grace.*

All questions respecting the possibility of inducing the allies to recognize Napoleon II. he had no hesitation in answering briefly and positively in the negative; but when they inquired "what would be the case if any other "prince of a royal house were called to the throne," he thought it better to explain to them more at length that such a sovereign, however well born, could only be looked upon as a usurper; that therefore "he must act "as a usurper, and must endeavour to turn the atten- "tion of the country from the defects of his title towards "war and foreign conquests;" and that consequently, for their own protection, the other sovereigns of Europe must require securities from such a ruler, which they would not think necessary if Louis were replaced on the throne. He was the more explicit on this point, because he was quite aware that at least one of the members of the Provisional Government was inclined to favour the enthronement of that other prince, the Duke of Orleans; and that the countenance of Alexander, whom he justly considered a weak-minded and meddling sovereign, was confidently reckoned on for such a scheme. He himself had lately been annoyed and offended by the unwillingness which Louis had shown to allow Peronne to remain in the hands of the British soldiers, which he looked upon as an insulting mark of distrust in himself: but he was not a man to allow private feelings to interfere with his deliberate judgment of what was called for by the interests of the world; and he therefore, though unauthorized, not only urged the unconditional restoration of Louis, but also insisted on the withdrawal from Paris of the regular troops as an indispensable condition of an

* Capefigue, 'Histoire de la Restauration,' ii., 460.

1815.
armistice, since "if Louis were to be restored while they "remained in Paris, he would be entirely in the hands of "the assemblies and of the army, who could not be "considered in any other light than as the instruments "and creatures of Napoleon."

It is clear that the restoration of Louis is mainly to be attributed to these views of his, so plainly and judiciously enforced; and he was sufficiently aware of the feelings of the British Cabinet to entertain no doubt but that they would approve of the language which he thus held; but he soon had proof that some of the allies were inclined to be jealous of his holding even the slightest communication with the French commissioners; for on one occasion while they were with him he received a despatch from Prince Metternich, saying that the Prince had heard that such agents were about to be sent to his head-quarters by the Provisional Government; but that it was hoped that he would not receive them, or enter into any communication with them. He had scarcely read it, however, when he reported its contents to them, with the addition that it would make no difference in his relations with them. "He should do as he pleased, and "he had no need that these gentlemen should send him "these orders."*

He continued to march on with all the speed compatible with the maintenance of order; and on the 30th he arrived at Louvres, a village only a few miles from Paris, where he received a fresh entreaty for an armistice from Marshal Davoust, as governor of Paris. But he adhered to his opinion that none of the measures as yet adopted by the Provisional Government afforded any assurance of peace; and therefore, although, as he said, he had every conceivable reason to desire to spare the blood

* Romilly's Memoirs, iii., 419-20.

of his troops, he still refused to agree to such a measure. By the 2nd of July he had advanced to Gonesse, and the proposal was renewed, and he was assured that Napoleon had fled from Paris; while at the same time he received a proposal from Blucher to attack Paris and to carry that capital by force of arms. In fact, such deep animosity did the Prussian prince feel towards everything French, that it was plain that he would rather have taken Paris by storm than have had it peacefully surrendered to him; and he would have risked almost any loss to his own troops to have acquired a right to retaliate upon it the same severity that Napoleon had displayed towards the citizens of Berlin. But an English general had no such long-standing wrongs to avenge, and Wellington altogether objected to the proposed assault of the city, expressing his doubt whether the two armies united would be strong enough to succeed; while at the same time, feeling that Napoleon's flight to the coast had greatly increased the chance of a permanent peace, he announced to his colleague the terms on which he was now disposed to agree to an armistice, which were nearly the same as those which he had already indicated to the French commissioner, with the addition of a stipulation that Paris should be given over to the care of the French National Guard till King Louis should order it otherwise. He saw clearly that by thus obtaining peaceable possession of Paris, as an ally of their sovereign rather than as a conqueror, he should best provide for the willing reception of Louis by the citizens, at no greater cost than giving up for himself and Blucher "the vain "triumph of entering the city at the head of their "victorious troops;" but this was no sacrifice at all to him, who, though he had in reality no better opinion of the French than his brother marshal, wished from

motives of deep policy to spare their feelings, and to avoid as far as possible giving to any of their measures the appearance of being adopted under foreign and hostile compulsion. Blucher, on the contrary, would have been only the more pleased the more they appeared to be the result of victory; but on this, as on other matters which he had even more at heart, he yielded to the ascendency of Wellington's superior mind; and on the 3rd of July a convention was concluded by which Davoust bound the French army to evacuate the capital within three days, and to retire behind the Loire: while the allied generals on their part promised to respect the civil authorities existing in the city; to protect all property public and private; and by the 12th article engaged that the citizens, "and in general all the in-"dividuals who were in the capital, should continue to "enjoy their rights and liberties, without any one "having a right to disquiet them, or to make any "inquiry whatever into any employment they occupied "or had occupied, or into their political conduct and "opinions."

At a later period events gave rise to considerable discussion as to the meaning and force of this article; but the view of it which Wellington then maintained was only the same which he now expressed when he forwarded a copy of the convention to the ministers; stating that "it decided all the military questions at "the moment existing at Paris, and touched nothing "political." And when Lord Bathurst, who evidently thought that the terms of this 12th article were susceptible of a larger interpretation, in consequence stated in his reply, that "in order that no doubt should "be entertained as to the sense in which this article was "to be considered by the Prince Regent, in conveying

"his entire approbation of the convention, he was com-
"manded to state that his Royal Highness deemed the
"12th article of it to be binding only on the conduct of
"the British and Prussian commanders, and the com-
"manders of such of the allies as might become parties
"to the convention by their ratification of it;" Wellington answered that "the convention bound nobody
"excepting the parties to it; the French army on one
"side, and the allied armies under Blucher and himself
"on the other; and that the 12th article could not be
"considered, and never was intended, to bind any other
"persons or authorities whatever, unless they should
"become parties to the convention."

To bring the leading people in Paris to the point which he desired, of agreeing to the re-establishment of Louis, required all the address of which he was master. And for one step which he took, that of seeking for the co-operation of Fouché and admitting him to his table, he was severely blamed even by some friends in England. The opinions, however, of people at home he regarded with deserved indifference; it really seemed as if the excitement of recent events had driven all parties out of their senses. Some hated the French so ardently that they even reproached him for having saved the bridge of Jena* from Blucher's vengeance; while others, such as Sir Francis Burdett, espousing the cause of Napoleon with still more ridiculous vehemence, actually went so far as to consult Sir Samuel Romilly† whether they could not procure the Emperor his liberty by moving in the Court of King's Bench for a writ of Habeas Corpus addressed to the captain of the 'Bellerophon.' It was no wonder that conduct like this should determine so self-relying a man as Wellington to act on his own

* Malcolm, ii., 108. † Romilly's 'Memoirs,' iii.

judgment. His own opinion was that both the ability and the dishonesty of the leading men in Paris were overrated. Some men who enjoyed a fair reputation with at least a considerable party in Europe, such as Lafayette, his penetration at once perceived to have neither honesty nor ability; and that nobleman, who at all times added the most boundless conceit and presumption to his other defects, he treated, as he told Malcolm,* "like a dog as he merited," convicting him of deliberate falsehood, and then bowing him out of the room. But others, though equally unprincipled, he equally saw had fair abilities, and influence also greater and more important than their talents. Really honest, honourable, and able men he pronounced did not exist in France. Even Talleyrand, who till the day of his death was generally looked upon as the most sagacious of all the French statesmen, he pronounced inferior in ability to Old Brag, as in times past he and Malcolm had nicknamed Eitul Punt, the wily minister of Scindiah. And having laid down as his rule of conduct, that "where "all were rascals it was necessary to employ those who "were the most useful,"† he put a force on his natural contempt for such a person as Fouché had shown himself, submitting with a good grace to what a regard for the peace of France and therefore of Europe rendered indispensable, and entered freely into communication with him; and preserving his usual ascendency even over the callous selfishness of the old regicide traitor, he speedily brought him to adopt, or at least to acquiesce in his own views of the policy required at the present crisis. He subsequently declared that had he kept aloof from Fouché, that minister had influence enough to have procured the proclamation of the Duke of Orleans as

* Malcolm, ii., 108. † Ibid.

king; and a prompt decision on this point was the more necessary, because the envoys who had been sent by the Provisional Government to the allied sovereigns on the Rhine had on their return delivered in a report of their proceedings which he stigmatized as wholly false; and which tended to create an impression that the allies were at least indifferent to the re-establishment of Louis, if not indeed rather unfavourable to such a measure. Even when he had brought Fouché to concur in the restoration of Louis, the old revolutionist contended earnestly, not only that the King ought to grant an universal amnesty, on which subject, as far as his wishes went, Wellington no doubt agreed with him, but also that he ought to adopt the tricolour as the national flag, an idea which the British general peremptorily rejected, saying with truth that such an act would be a ratification of the principles and of the worst excesses of the Revolution.

His firmness on all the important points of the negotiation proved so successful that by the end of the three days fixed by the convention for the evacuation of Paris by the French army, all was settled in accordance with his judgment; nor has the fact of his having been in reality the influence that ruled everything escaped the notice of the French historians of that epoch: the most acute of whom* has remarked on the vast difference between the authority exercised by England now and that which she had exerted in the previous year, which he attributes solely to Wellington's weight of character: and which, as he points out, was so great at this time that Alexander, who in 1814 had been the chief mover in most of the measures adopted, now, on his arrival at Paris, found himself reduced to play only a very

* Capefigue, 'Histoire de la Restauration,' ii., 445.

secondary part; and was, indeed forced to acquiesce in many things notoriously contrary to his inclination.

On the 7th of July Wellington and Blucher entered the French capital at the head of their armies; but the difference between the feelings and views of the commanders was shown in the quarters which they took up for their respective troops: Wellington encamped his in the Bois de Boulogne, on the outside of the actual city; but Blucher caused his soldiers to bivouac in the streets, in the public gardens, and even in the churches. Nor did the difference stop here. The next day Louis himself entered his capital. He was received by Wellington with the most complete deference; but the welcome with which Blucher wished to greet him was the blowing up of one of the finest bridges in Paris, because Napoleon had commemorated his subjugation of Prussia by giving it the appellation of the Bridge of Jena; and the imposition of a contribution of four millions of money upon the citizens.

No interposition but that of Wellington could have averted from Paris the destruction thus threatened of one of its most beautiful and useful monuments, and the impoverishment of her citizens to enable them to satisfy this vengeful exaction. But the British general felt, not indeed that such measures were undeserved, for in truth they would have fallen far short of an adequate retaliation for the unprovoked cruelties which Napoleon, when it was in his power, had exercised upon Prussia; but that the unpopularity of them would rebound from his allies, who had done such actions, upon Louis himself; and would not only make his task of governing more difficult, but would be made use of by his enemies as a means of undermining and perhaps overturning his power altogether. He therefore remonstrated with Blucher

with the greatest possible tact and delicacy, though at the same time he was so resolved to prevent an act which could not be done without creating a general belief that he had countenanced it, that he was prepared even to place British sentinels on the bridge with orders, if necessary, to interfere by force to save it. He pointed out to Blucher that Louis was willing to change its name; that if it were looked upon as a monument of past triumph, it might fairly be argued that as such it was protected by the convention under which they had both obtained admission into the city; and on these accounts, as well as on that of the irritation which such an act would cause, and the difficulties which it would throw in the way of the restored King, he entreated him, not indeed at once to abandon his design, but to postpone his execution of it till the arrival of the allied sovereigns of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, to whose decision he himself promised to submit. In a somewhat similar strain he argued that as "one party to a general alliance "ought not to derive all the benefit resulting from the "operations of the combined armies," the exaction of any contribution might well be suspended till the same period; and with a delicate flattery which must have had its full influence on the proud and fiery temper of the veteran prince, he reminded him of the great advantages that had been obtained by their joint armies ever "since he had had the happiness of acting in concert "with his Highness," and traced them all to the unparalleled harmony and unanimity which had subsisted between them.

Blucher yielded as usual, but not very willingly; and took no steps whatever to repress the licence which his soldiers of every rank permitted themselves to use towards the French in general, which naturally excited the

citizens to feelings and acts of undiscriminating animosity against both the allied armies. As is not unfrequently the case, those who deserved it least suffered the most; French officers, even of high rank, took every opportunity of insulting British officers at the coffee-houses and at the theatres; some of our officers were even shot at in the streets; and Wellington began to entertain anxious apprehensions lest, if some stop were not put to these mutual exhibitions of ill-feeling, the whole country should presently rise in arms against both his and the Prussian force.

So doubtful did he even yet feel of the future course of events that, as the bulk of the army which had been employed in America had now returned to England, he earnestly recommended the ministers to send him abundant reinforcements, that he might be prepared for every possible contingency.

As far as personal honours and rewards could reconcile any one to the laborious duties and manifold vexations of his situation, he had no reason to complain; for never in the history of Europe had they been heaped with such profusion on any subject of any nation. Not only were crosses and stars and field-marshal's truncheons showered upon him by every monarch who had an army, and by every prince who had an order, but the more substantial rewards of pecuniary grants and landed estates were not wanting. The moment that the news of his defeat of Napoleon reached England, the British Parliament at the desire of the Prince Regent voted him a fresh sum of 200,000*l.*, to erect or purchase a house suitable to the ducal rank to which he had been raised in the preceding year, and it was afterwards arranged, at the appropriate suggestion of Sir Watkin Wynn, that the estate so bought should be held of the Crown by the yearly presentation

to the sovereign of a tri-coloured flag on the 18th of June, as the estate of Blenheim bound the successors of Marlborough to make an offering of a banner of fleur-de-lis on each recurring anniversary of the victory of Blenheim. And the King of the Netherlands, in acknowledgment of the preservation of his own dominions, which he attributed in no small degree to the result of Waterloo, created him Prince of Waterloo, and accompanied the title with the grant of an estate of the estimated value of 4,000*l.* a year.

For such favours Wellington expressed in dignified terms abundant gratitude, but the recompenses thus plentifully showered upon him did not make him forget the merit of the soldiers whose valour and devotion had enabled him to earn them; and, with a kind regard to their feelings and merits, he not only argued against the limitation of the third Order of the Bath to field officers, urging that many captains also fully deserved it; but, departing still further from his usual rule of conduct, volunteered a recommendation to the Duke of York to grant a medal in commemoration of the late victory to every soldier engaged in it; and at a later period (even at the risk of having interested motives attributed to him by those who did not know his high-minded indifference to money) he was also the original suggester and most earnest advocate of the proposal that the Government should give the million of money, which Louis XVIII. was bound to pay to the nation, as prize money to the army, whose victory had enabled him to pay it.

CHAPTER XXXV.

He recommends great moderation in dealing with France—The works of Art are restored to their original owners—Wellington is appointed to command the Army of Occupation—Trial and condemnation of Ney.

THOUGH Louis was restored to his throne, it was not yet settled what conditions the allies would impose upon him and his country. And on this important subject constant reference was made by the ministers at home to Wellington's opinion. As usual, his judgment was expressed on the side of moderation and generosity. It was well known that some of the allies thought no humiliation to which they could reduce France could be undeserved by her; and they would willingly have seen her stripped of territories and fortresses to such an extent as should retaliate upon her the evils which their countries had suffered from the ambition of Napoleon, and should disable her from again becoming as formidable an enemy as she had proved herself to her neighbours. To these views he professed himself wholly opposed, arguing against them on the soundest principles of political wisdom.

He admitted that, as compared with the other continental powers, France was still possessed of a dangerous

superiority of strength; nevertheless he maintained, (besides that the accession of Louis to the treaty made at Vienna in March, between the different allied nations, debarred them all from combining to deprive him of any considerable territory) that the conduct of his people in general had not been such as to deserve any great degree of punishment beyond what had been imposed upon them in the preceding year. To a certain extent he even considered it as meritorious; for though, when the revolt of the army had enabled Napoleon to recover his authority, the people had certainly submitted to his usurpation, on the other hand, the facility with which he was afterwards dispossessed of that authority by a single battle plainly showed, in Wellington's opinion, that they had in their hearts been favourable to the cause which the allies also favoured. Indeed, in his judgment, the sincere partisans of Napoleon were confined to a very few of the eastern provinces; and, as he contended, it would clearly be unjust to punish the whole kingdom for the fault of so small a portion of it.

Moreover, he argued that sound policy led inevitably to the same conclusion. The object of the allies was to obtain permanent peace, which might enable the different sovereigns to reduce their existing military establishments, and to turn their attention to healing the wounds which war had inflicted, by the improvement of the internal condition of their respective subjects. But if they should demand the cession of extensive territories from France, whether King Louis consented to make it or not, there could be no confidence in the stability of peace. Should Louis refuse to make it, there would at once be war. Should he consent, it was probable that such consent on his own part would be most unwilling, and far more so on the part of his people; and that both

King and people would be constantly on the watch to seize the first opportunity of recovering what they would look upon as having been ungenerously and unfairly extorted from them. He therefore, on grounds both of policy and justice, objected to a demand being made upon France for any large cession of territory. The way to insure peace was, he said, not to render France weak, but to render her government strong and stable. And he believed that another measure which had been suggested as a kind of alternative, namely, the temporary occupation of some of the French fortresses, and the maintenance of an allied army in France for a fixed time, would be far better calculated to answer the end which the allies had in view; since it would not only protect them from French aggression, but would at the same time give strength and security to the government of Louis, by introducing into the country "a system and habits of "peace."

There was, however, one class of cessions to be required from France, the demand of which he considered to be founded both in justice and policy, and which demand therefore he did not scruple to enforce. When Napoleon had carried his victorious arms through the different countries of continental Europe, he had not been contented with the right which occasional precedent had warranted conquerors in exacting, but had extended his unscrupulous grasp to things which had hitherto been respected by the invariable usages of modern warfare, bearing off as booty from the different cities which had been unable to resist his might the various treasures of art, which many of them prized beyond even their former renown, or (in this respect forming perhaps a less erroneous estimate) their existing liberties. Thus, the Apollo had been reft from Rome, the Venus from Florence; the

horses of St .Mark had been transferred from their square at Venice to the Parisian Carrousel; churches had been despoiled of their altarpieces, the houses of individuals of their heirlooms, and the galleries of Berlin and Brussels, of Spain and of Italy, had been alike ransacked to enrich the Louvre with the treasures of all countries and all ages. Scarcely any act of Napoleon had been looked upon as a more flagrant abuse of the rights of war and victory, or had excited more general indignation; and Louis, before he returned to Paris, had voluntarily promised to the Kings of Prussia and of the Netherlands a restitution of those works of art of which their respective countries had been thus wrongfully deprived. As might have been expected, he had no sooner been re-established on his throne than those other nations which had been equally pillaged preferred a similar claim for restitution. Spain demanded her Murillos, Italy her Titians, Austria reclaimed her horses for Venice, and even the Pope, though the ecclesiastical head of half the Christian world, preferred an earnest petition for the replacement of the Delian god in the Vatican. Right and reason were plainly on their side, firstly, because the allies, as conquerors of Paris, had clearly now all the right to retake those treasures which Napoleon could ever have had to take them; and secondly, because Louis, by admitting the claim of two of the allied sovereigns, had disabled himself from opposing the similar demand of other potentates. But probably he had not at first considered the lengths to which his original promise of restitution must inevitably lead him; and perhaps, also, he had not been aware how unwillingly the Parisian populace would part with things which they valued, not more perhaps as triumphs of art than as memorials of triumphs of war. He therefore

now sought by every means in his power to evade the fulfilment of his promise even to the kings to whom his word had been given. But the allied sovereigns made common cause with one another on this subject, and Wellington, though he had nothing to claim on the part of Great Britain, was especially inclined to co-operate with them. He felt that the unwillingness of the French people in general to part with the pictures and statues in question only made it the more desirable that they should be compelled to do so, as a proof that united "Europe was "too strong for them, and that whatever might be the "extent at any time of their momentary or partial suc- "cess, the day of retribution must come." It was, in his eyes, an opportunity of giving France "a great moral "lesson," which he thought it most important not to throw away.

Some of the French ministers endeavoured to avert the act, which they called the spoliation of the national museums, by pretending that they were protected by one of the articles of the Convention of Paris: but this was so far from being the case that, as Wellington proved, the commissioners who negotiated that convention on the part of the French were especially warned at the time by Blucher that that article did not apply to the pictures which Louis had promised to restore to Prussia, and by himself that, looking upon himself in this instance "as the ally of all the nations in Europe," whatever was granted to Prussia he should claim for other nations also. His determination settled this point as it settled every other, and but little further resistance was made. As Talleyrand considered that it would place the King in a better position with his subjects if the reclaimed treasures appeared to be taken by force rather than willingly given up by him, Wellington did

not object to gratify him in this particular. Some parties of British engineers superintended the packing of the pictures in the Louvre, and, as there was some expectation of a disturbance being raised by the people on the occasion of the removal of the horses, a body of Austrian troops with loaded cannon was drawn up in front of the Place du Carrousel, under the terror of whom the populace stood by sulky but unresisting, while the steeds, which had been the prized decoration of so many cities, were once more lowered from their pedestal to return to Venice, as almost the last memorial of her ancient greatness.

But though stern on this subject, and resolute thus to enforce on the Parisians what he deemed a salutary lesson of humiliation, he was not the less careful in other respects to save them as far as lay in his power from the bitterness of feeling that their city was in the hands of a victorious enemy. The troops under his command were kept in the most rigid order; no licence was allowed, no complaint of the conduct of any individual, however trivial, was unheeded; no wrong done by any officer or soldier was unredressed; all trespass in search of game, all arrogance at places of public resort or amusement was severely repressed. And so favourable an impression did the discipline which he thus caused to be observed, and the general demeanour of himself and those under his authority make on the citizens in general, aided perhaps in some degree by the remarkable contrast which it showed to the behaviour of the Prussians, that Talleyrand said to one of the English visitors, that "the manner in which he had acted while occupying "Paris was calculated to soften the asperity and lessen "the hatred of the two great rival nations."*

The Austrian and Russian armies, with their sove-

* Malcolm's Life, ii., 101.

reigns, had arrived in the neighbourhood of Paris in the course of July, and such a concourse of great men and plumed warriors was not allowed to pass off without a series of festivities and magnificent entertainments, among which the hospitalities exercised by the British Commander were neither the least frequent nor the least splendid. The most remarkable displays were the military reviews, which the presence of so many armies collected for actual service permitted to be of unusual magnitude and splendour. At the beginning of September, Alexander collected his whole army, consisting of upwards of 150,000 men and 500 guns, on the plains of Vertu, near Chalons, and exhibited them to his brother sovereigns and to a gorgeous company of statesmen and warriors, among whom were mingled no small portion of ladies, chiefly from our own island. The review had been above a month in preparation, and to add to its splendour, many of the regiments had been refurnished with arms and accoutrements from England. So vast was the array that the whole day was consumed in the troops marching past the sovereigns and resuming their formation in line. And great was the impression which their vast masses and orderly movements made on the foreign officers; but Wellington, comparing them in his own mind with the soldiers who had won Orthes and Salamanca, saw nothing to alarm a British general if ever he should have to encounter them. It was true, he admitted, that "the precision of their "movements resembled the arrangements of a theatre "rather than those of such an army;" but he added, that "his own little army would move round them in any "direction while they were executing a single change."* And though he did not live to see the day when the

* Londonderry's 'War in Germany,' 335.

unprincipled ambition of Nicholas brought the two nations into collision on the battle-field, he had not long been laid in the dust before the accuracy of his estimate of the real efficiency of the two armies was verified by the victories which one of his most gallant and chosen friends and pupils won on the memorable fields of Alma and of Inkermann.

Nor did he withhold from his sovereign's allies an opportunity of forming some judgment of the qualities of those soldiers of whom he justly boasted as "the best "troops in the world;" for on the Emperor Alexander expressing to him a wish to see the British army, he replied that His Majesty might do so the next day; and well aware that no preparation was necessary for his men, on the ensuing morning he drew them up in array on the hills of the Montmartre. He had received some considerable reinforcements from England, so that he had now upwards of 50,000 men under his command; and the spectacle which he exhibited to his guests on this occasion did not consist of the tame manœuvres of an ordinary review, but was a faithful representation of the battle of Salamanca,* in which the rapidity of the evolutions and the grand style of the march in line of the British regiments extorted from the most jealous of the foreign spectators a frank confession of their superiority.

Wellington could not but feel a secret satisfaction at the admiration thus excited by the comrades whom he so well knew and so greatly trusted; but the formal parade and pompous grandeur of this period was but little to his taste, and he was much better pleased to lay aside his uniform and his stars, and, after dining quietly with a friend, to go unobserved to the theatre; though even

* 'Life of Malcolm,' ii., 134.

here attendance on him was not without its perils; for, as he commonly went in a gig, he was his own charioteer, and drove so fast that his most frequent companion, Sir John Malcolm, though not a man of weak nerves, was in constant expectation of being upset.*

He was not sorry when the allied sovereigns quitted Paris to return to their respective countries; having before their departure conferred upon him the well-merited honour of unanimously appointing him Commander-in-Chief of their contingents which were to form the army of occupation which it was now decided was for a time to remain in France. The greater part of the arrangements of the details of this measure, and also of the negotiations with the French ministry for the conclusion of a permanent peace and for the settlement of the future boundaries of France, devolved upon him; and he so conducted them as to satisfy the allies, and to obtain the scarcely-discontented submission of the French themselves, who were well aware that far severer concessions would have been exacted from them had any of the allies more near to their frontier been allowed a predominant influence in the treaty. Instead of France, as in 1814, being reduced to her boundaries as they stood in 1792, the period of 1790 was now chosen, by which she lost some few fortresses which had been the first acquisitions of her revolutionary arms. She was also bound to pay the allies 28,000,000*l.* as an indemnity for the expenses of the last war; a still larger sum to some of the continental sovereigns as a compensation for the injuries inflicted on their dominions by the different wars which she had waged upon them during the revolution; and she was also to be at the entire expense of maintaining the army of occupation while it remained in her

* Malcolm's Life, ii., 113.

territories. If these terms appear severe, it must be remembered that they were far milder than the past oppressions and exactions of the French armies under Napoleon for which they were intended as a compensation, or than the countries formerly oppressed and despoiled would have willingly imposed upon her. Austria, Prussia, Spain, and the Netherlands severally desired to reclaim territories and fortresses which would have driven back the French frontier to nearly the limits at which Louis XIV. found it at his accession; and it was only the magnanimous impartiality of Britain, whose influence was now wielded by Wellington, and was supported in most respects by Russia, which was too far removed from the French frontier to be interested in the proposed concessions or reclamations, which saved France from a dismemberment which would have reduced her to the rank of a second-rate kingdom. But while Wellington thought it impolitic as well as ungenerous to weaken France to such an extent, he was no less desirous to see her neighbours strong enough to be able to resist her aggressions, and with this view he persuaded his own Government to give the sum of 5,000,000*l.*, which had been fixed as the British share of the indemnity for the expenses of the war, to the King of the Netherlands to enable him to restore the line of fortresses which in former times had been found so effectual a barrier against French invasion, which, as has been mentioned before, he had examined in the preceding year, for the reconstruction of which the British engineers were already engaged in preparing plans and estimates, and which were so uninterruptedly carried on under his inspection and superintendence while he remained on the Continent, that by the end of 1818 he was able to report to the Congress at Aix la Chapelle that they were

almost completed; and that by the end of next year the Belgian frontier might be considered secure.*

By the end of October he began to prepare to remove his troops from Paris into the cantonments which they were to occupy as a portion of the army of occupation; and here again he had great annoyances to contend with, owing to what he considered the injudicious measures of the authorities at the Horse Guards. The forces which he had with him in Paris exceeded the amount of the contingent which Great Britain was engaged to furnish; so that it was necessary to send some portion home; it was also natural that on the re-establishment of peace the strength of the British army altogether should be reduced. But he was exceedingly anxious to retain under his command as many of his old infantry regiments as possible, especially those which had served in Spain, which he deservedly characterized as the best troops in the world; and partly with this wish, and also on the ground that an effective infantry is the most difficult force to form and the cheapest to maintain, he recommended that the principal reductions should take place in the cavalry. But he began to fear that the Government intended to pare down the British portion of his army to the lowest possible amount, and to make up their contingent with foreign troops, "thinking that "they could get them cheaper than British soldiers, and "forgetting the number of years required to form the "army which they had, and that, if they should disband "it, they would destroy the military profession in "England." He attributed this design to the fear which the Government entertained of the Opposition in Parliament, and of some of the newspapers; but, whatever might be the cause, he began to apprehend that he

* Capefigue, v., 388.

should not be allowed to retain above 8,000 British troops; and that, as it would prove impossible to obtain more than about the same number from Hanover, not only would his army be very inefficient at the very moment when it was most important that it should be strong, but his country would lie under the disgrace of appearing unable to fulfil her engagements from the very first moment at which she had entered into them. His energetic remonstrances were not without effect in preventing the ultimate adoption of the extreme measures of reduction which had been at first contemplated, but still more was done in that way than he considered judicious or even safe; and he was far from satisfied with the composition of the British contingent, or with the arrangements which were made respecting his staff.

Before he quitted Paris his interposition was loudly invoked in some quarters to save the life of Marshal Ney. That most distinguished officer, after having won an undying renown under Napoleon, had accepted service under Louis; and on his former master's return from Elba, had cheerfully taken the command of a force intended to arrest his progress; even expressing himself with unnecessary vehemence against the folly and iniquity of his new enterprise, and promising to bring him to Paris "in an iron cage." He was probably at the moment perfectly sincere in his professions of loyalty to Louis; but unhappily, though the bravest and most resolute of men in the battle-field, he was not greatly gifted either with political sagacity or with moral courage. The moment that he arrived within reach of Napoleon's fascinations they proved too strong for him; and that great chief, in some degree marked out for empire by the unparalleled ascendency which he at all times exerted over all with whom he came in contact, had but little

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difficulty in again enlisting him under his banner. With what rare energy he fought at Quatre Bras, with what desperate valour he led charge after charge at Waterloo has been already related. From that field, so fatal to his hopes, he returned to Paris, made one vehement speech to the peers, in which he protested against all further resistance to the allies as impracticable; and then, feeling that the greatness of his treason had rendered his pardon impossible, he obtained passports under a feigned name from Fouché and Talleyrand, and quitted Paris with the intention of escaping to Switzerland. He had nearly reached Geneva when some indescribable feeling prompted him to return to his own estate, where, before his friends could remonstrate with him on his imprudence, the officiousness of the prefect arrested him, and he was brought back to Paris as a prisoner.

The ministers, who would have been glad to connive at his escape, had now no alternative but to bring him to trial. Yet so great was the admiration that his unparalleled heroism in times past, and especially in the Russian campaign, had excited, that they found some very serious difficulties in carrying out their intention. In the first instance they appointed a council of war to try him; but Marshal Moncey, who, as the senior of all the French marshals, was selected to preside over the court, declined the office; writing a most eloquent letter to the King to excuse himself from condemning one* "to whom so many Frenchmen owed their lives, to "whom so many families were indebted for the safety of "their sons, their husbands, or their fathers." Moncey was deprived of his rank and imprisoned for his refusal; but when the council of war was reconstituted, it found a new means of extricating itself from the difficulty

* See the letter in Capefigue's 'Histoire de la Restauration,' iii., 352.

which its members felt as keenly as he had felt it, and declared themselves incompetent to sit in judgment on a peer of France.

As a last resource it was determined to impeach him before the peers. The case against him admitted of neither refutation nor explanation; but, eventually, some one suggested to his counsel, themselves among the ablest advocates of the French bar, to argue that their client was protected by that article of the convention of the 3rd of July, under which Paris was surrendered to Wellington's and Blucher's armies, which guaranteed "his rights and liberties to every individual "in the capital; and promised that no inquiry should be "made into the political conduct or opinions of any one."

The peers declined to entertain an argument founded on any engagements entered into by foreign generals. And then Ney and his wife, the Princesse de Moskwa, addressed themselves to the ambassadors of the different European nations then in Paris; and more especially to the Duke of Wellington, requesting, or it may be even said, demanding as a right his interference to save the marshal as fully protected by the capitulation which he himself had signed, and in virtue of which he had received the surrender of Paris. The Duke declined to interfere, repeating to both prince and princess the assertion which he had made to Lord Bathurst at the moment that the convention was signed, that it was never intended to affect any but military questions, and that it dealt with no political matter; and explaining further that Louis was not bound by it, since he had never ratified it. It was in vain that Madame Ney with all the fidelity and earnestness of a wife, argued that the King's entrance into Paris in virtue of the convention was in itself the strongest possible practical ratification of it on

his part; the Duke rejoined that that was a question for Louis himself to decide; and adhered to his refusal to interfere. It is commonly believed that whatever interference was exerted by others was hostile to the gallant but weak-minded marshal. It is reported that the Duchesse d'Angoulême, who had been excited to the most sanguine anticipations of success by Ney's adherence to her uncle, and who had been proportionally exasperated at his defection, was above all others loud in urging the King that the safety of his throne demanded that some examples should be made, and that none could be made if so important and flagrant a traitor as Ney should be spared.

As was inevitable in so notorious a case, he was convicted and condemned by the almost unanimous vote of his judges. The very next morning his sentence was executed, and the intrepid warrior who had fought countless battles for his country without receiving a single wound, fell dead in the garden of the Luxemburgh, before the muskets of his ancient comrades.

Wellington had never yet encountered such obloquy as was now levelled against him for refusing to urge upon the French government the claim of Ney to protection, as assured to him by the convention; though it was believed in many quarters that he did privately recommend the infliction of the milder penalty of banishment, but without success. If the question were to be decided by a reference to the strict words of the 12th article, it would certainly appear that they are so general that Ney and every one else then in Paris was included under them. Nor is it quite easy to see what occasion there was for the insertion of any such article at all in a convention purely military, and binding no one but the

generals who signed it; since it would have been a measure utterly unprecedented, except perhaps by one or two of the worst actions of Napoleon, for foreign generals of hostile armies to institute any inquiry, with a view to punishment, into the political opinions and conduct of any inhabitants of a city about to be surrendered to them. But (and this is the proper way of considering this and every similar document) if we look at the intention and understanding of both the parties to the agreement, the case is entirely changed, for not only, as has been already stated, did the Duke himself, before there seemed any chance of Ney being affected by any interpretation of its language, affirm that the convention dealt with no political questions, but the French authorities were of the same opinion; nor did Ney himself conceive that he was in the least protected by it. Carnot, one of the principal members of the Provisional Government, had described it in words almost identical* with those used by the Duke in his despatch to Lord Bathurst. Fouché, who was at the head of the Provisional Government, recommended Ney to flee in disguise; and before the arrival of Louis, gave the marshal a passport to quit the kingdom under a feigned name, of which he at the moment thankfully availed himself; thus showing beyond all question that Fouché had no idea but that, if Ney were found in France on the King's entrance into Paris, that monarch would be at perfect liberty to proceed against him, while by his flight Ney himself proved his agreement with that opinion. Again neither did Moncey, though so resolute to bear no share in his condemnation, nor did the other marshals who subsequently formed the council of war, perceive the slightest pretext for acquitting him on the ground of his being protected by the convention; since,

* Une convention purement militaire, en écartant toute question politique.

had they seen such, it cannot be doubted that they would gladly have embraced it in preference to the course which they did adopt. Nor did it even occur to Ney's own counsel to urge any such argument in his favour till it was suggested to them by some ingenious partisan of the now hopeless prisoner; and they, as in duty bound, made the most of any point which could by the most remote possibility tend to the safety of one whom they in common with the rest of the world could not but admire, and would gladly have esteemed. It may be added, that before the end of July, long before Ney was brought to trial, a royal proclamation ordered legal proceedings to be taken against a considerable number of persons, and banished a still larger number from Paris to particular districts; all of whom were, equally with Ney, residing in the city at the time of the convention; and not one of whom had conceived that its provisions protected them from the anger of the sovereign, or from the visitations of the law.

If then Ney was not protected by the terms of the convention; and it seems clear that Wellington had abundant justification for thinking that he was not; it is quite plain that the Duke could not found on it any interference with the course which the French Government had resolved to take with regard to the marshal; since he was the last man in the world to put forward a plea in the validity of which he did not himself believe. If he had not that ground, he could have no other to induce him to depart from his invariable rule of not interfering in matters which did not fall within his own province; and his own rigorous regard for truth and honesty, which had made him in the preceding year announce to the Duc d'Angoulême (anxious as he was at heart to promote the cause of the Bourbons) that he should discon-

nect himself with it if the Duke allowed his partisans to deceive the people by false representations, now forcibly operated to prevent his feeling for one so undeniably guilty of falsehood and treason, that pity which his grand military reputation and his glorious achievements must otherwise have secured to him from a British warrior, than whom no one was ever more prompt to acknowledge virtue and merit alike in inferiors and in enemies.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Wellington's conduct in command of the Army of Occupation—He is President of a Committee appointed to investigate the magazines of France—Attempts are made to assassinate him—He breaks up the army and returns to England.

AT the beginning of December the British army began to quit Paris; part to return home; part to enter into the cantonments which were provided for them as a portion of the army of occupation. The spring had commenced before Wellington himself quitted Paris; when he established himself at an old-fashioned country house called the Château Mont St. Martin, in the neighbourhood of Cambray, in which town were fixed the official head-quarters. He also kept up an establishment at Paris; and made frequent and long visits to that capital. At the very beginning of the discussions relating to the establishment of the army of occupation, he had expressed his opinion that "the ministers of the "allied courts of Great Britain, Austria, Russia, and "Prussia, should be a sort of permanent Council, and "should deliberate upon events passing at Paris, should "be in constant correspondence with the commanding "officer of the allied force, and should make him ac- "quainted with all that occurred and with their opinions

"on it." He added, with his invariable willingness to bear responsibility, that "he did not mean this to relieve "him from the necessity of judging for himself, and "from all the responsibility attached to it." The allies fully entered into all his views with respect to his conduct in discharge of the arduous duty now entrusted to him, wisely leaving him the most unfettered discretion; and, in order the better to enable him to exercise it, they ordered their several ambassadors at the French court to maintain a regular correspondence with him; and arrangements were at the same time made for a constant communication between him and the ministers of King Louis, to insure the most confidential and rapid interchange of any suggestions which any sudden emergencies might possibly render desirable. And his frequent visits to the capital were made chiefly in order to facilitate these communications, which all judged to be so desirable.

There can be no greater proof of the admirable manner in which he maintained discipline and order among so heterogeneous an army as that under his command—of which, at least four-fifths hated the French with a personal hatred, and had been taught even by their commanders to consider any injury which they could inflict on them and on their country as the righteous indulgence of a just revenge—than the fact that the very existence of such an enormous force in the country is passed over without complaint, and even without notice by the French historians of the period, till they have occasion to mention the steps taken by their government to procure the relief of the kingdom from so expensive a burden.

But while thus maintaining the most vigorous discipline, Wellington was as willing as ever to promote

among his officers every relaxation which did not interfere with the rights of the inhabitants. His mirth was as light, and his manners as frank as when in early youth they won for him the regard of all with whom he became acquainted. Both at Paris and at Mont St. Martin he dispensed a princely hospitality. And at the latter place he had his hounds as usual, which were attended by a vast field of hunters, now appearing in somewhat more sportsmanlike appointments than the varied equipments in which they had scoured the Portuguese frontier. He himself had hunted a good deal with the Royal hounds near Paris in the winter of 1814; and then, in compliment to the princes whom he was accompanying, he had equipped himself according to the French notions of a correct hunting costume, in a gold-laced coat, cocked hat, and jack-boots, and, with a large hunting-knife or sword by his side, had followed the chase in decorous gravity, while the wood rang with a din of French horns drowning the voices of the hounds, till the chase came to a termination by its bewildered object being driven sufficiently within reach of one of the Royal Duke's fowling-pieces; but now, as master of his own hounds, he gladly returned to a more suitable attire, and in the uniform of an English hunt-club hallooed on his hounds with his own cheery voice, and, laying aside his authority with his cocked-hat, enjoyed the chances and mishaps of the sport with as keen a relish as the youngest of his subalterns. Sometimes the game was of a nobler kind than is to be found in the British coverts; wild boars being roused in the forests, which were pursued by the mounted hunters with spears; and in this kind of chase, to which the occasional danger gave additional zest, the Duke was particularly skilful; entering into it with such enthusiasm, that when in one instance he killed with

his own hand a beast of unusual size which had charged him so closely as to strike the sole of his foot with his tusk, he felt, as he afterwards told one of his acquaintance, more pleasure at the achievement than at any exploit he had ever performed in his life.* The officers too established private theatricals at Cambray, at which he was a frequent visitor; and thus, till the autumn of 1818, the time passed with as little of the hardships of military life as were ever experienced by an army in a foreign country.

Once during these three years Wellington visited England to discuss the position of the French government with the Cabinet; on which occasion the House of Commons again paid him the compliment of sending a deputation to return him their thanks for his victory at Waterloo, and to congratulate him on his safe return to his country. And once he received a visit from the Dukes of Kent and Cambridge, and collected nearly the whole of his British troops for a grand review in their honour; but these were almost the only exceptions to the ordinary routine of affairs that occurred during the whole period.

Still, though his exertions rendered the occupation of France by his army as little burdensome to the inhabitants as possible, it had scarcely continued a twelvemonth before the French ministers became anxious to shorten the time allotted for its stay; which had been originally fixed at five years: in fact, the revenues of France, greatly impoverished by the long wars of Napoleon, were totally unable to discharge the large indemnities which it had been agreed that she should pay to the different allied nations, and to support at the same time the expense of maintaining so considerable an army of foreign troops in addition to her own forces. From this difficulty

* Rogers's Recollections, p. 219.

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the Duc de Richelieu, the Prime Minister, sought relief by appealing to the Emperor Alexander, stating frankly the distress to which his country was reduced; and Alexander having communicated the note which he had received from him to his allies, Wellington was consulted, and at once recommended the immediate reduction of the army of occupation by one fifth of its number.* And soon afterwards a diplomatic and financial committee was appointed to investigate the whole subject of the engagements of France, and to recommend such a modification of them as should appear calculated to place it within her power to meet them. Over this committee he was appointed to preside. Austria and Prussia took but a secondary part in the negotiations, but Alexander wrote to him, complimenting him on "the wisdom and "moderation with which, more than once, he had "reconciled the most important interests; entreating "him to turn his attention to the disentanglement of "the complications attending the discharge of the en- "gagements which had been imposed upon France at a "time when it was not easy to foresee their enormous "development;" and expressing his earnest wish "to "confer on him, with the unanimous consent of the "allies, the principal direction of the negotiations which "were about to be opened at Paris on the subject of "those engagements, and on the most equitable manner "of deciding the subject by common consent."

The Duke applied himself with characteristic energy to the new duties thus imposed upon him; and the result of his labours did not belie the expectations that had been formed of his judgment and impartiality. The indemnities which were claimed by the different powers under the treaty of November, 1815, were reduced to such a

* See Capefigue, vol. v., pp. 152, 203, 239, 343.

sum that the French financiers were able to raise a loan for their discharge; and in the autumn of 1818 a congress of the ministers of the different allied powers was held at Aix la Chapelle, at which, in deference chiefly to his recommendation, it was decided to act upon a clause in the original treaty which had provided for the possible evacuation of France in three years; and to withdraw the army entirely at the end of November.

No part of the Duke's career appears to have given foreigners a loftier idea of his character than his conduct with respect to the evacuation of France: the eloquent and sagacious historian of the restoration,* while gratefully acknowledging "the immense service which he "rendered to France by the arrangement of the claims "of the foreign nations and the impartiality which he "displayed in the arbitration of them," dwells with still higher eulogy on the "high-minded language, doing "honour to his own character," which he held on all occasions on a question in which his position as Commander-in-Chief gave his opinion the most decisive weight; and above all, on the disinterestedness with which he voluntarily gave up "his grand position in "France as generalissimo of the allies, which made him, "in some degree, a member of the government, and with "which he sacrificed the immense establishment and "revenue which he was enjoying;" praising him the more because "he knew that the personal opinion of "Lord Castlereagh and of a great party among the "British aristocracy was favourable to the continuation "of the army of occupation as indispensable. But none "of these different personal interests of his own had "any influence with him; and being of opinion that "France had not only discharged the stipulated pay-

* Capefigue, v., 355-7.

" ments, but that her government now appeared to have " established order and to show a fair prospect of stability, " and that consequently the necessity for such a measure " of precaution as the occupation of its territory by a " foreign army had ceased," he did not hesitate to recommend its cessation.

Whatever differences of opinion may have existed between the Duke and Lord Castlereagh respecting some minor details of the different measures to be adopted, M. Capefigue is probably mistaken in thinking that in advising the evacuation of France the Duke was acting in opposition to the wishes of that minister and of the party with which he was most closely connected by political ties in England, as he certainly is when he asserts the existence of a jealousy at the congress of Aix la Chapelle between these two illustrious men, arising from a mutual desire of each to play the principal part in the pending negotiations, when in reality they were both too lofty minded to feel jealous of any one, and were bound to one another by the closest ties of friendship, which were never relaxed till the untimely death of the great foreign minister. Nor even at Aix la Chapelle did their positions in the least clash with one another. The vast discretionary power with which the allies had invested the Duke on his first assuming the command of the army of occupation inevitably rendered his opinion influential beyond that of any one on all matters relating to the existing condition of France, and to the expediency of continuing or relinquishing the occupation of that country; while, on the other hand, many of the affairs which occupied the attention of the congress, such as the renewal of the quadruple alliance, and the secret treaty entered into by Great Britain, Austria, Russia and Prussia, to provide for the measures to be adopted in the

event of any fresh commotion in France, naturally belonged more to the province of Lord Castlereagh as Foreign Secretary; and though the Duke was consulted on these treaties also, it was Lord Castlereagh who really negotiated them, and to whom the responsibility for and credit of them, whether for good or evil, really belongs.

And as Wellington coincided with his friend in approving of these measures, so no doubt did Castlereagh agree with him in desiring the anticipation of the period which was to leave France at liberty to apply all her resources to her own purposes; though, as the author to whom we have already made such frequent reference remarks,* if there had been any wish on the part of either of them to question the re-establishment of order and tranquillity in the country, the wickedness of some of the French at the beginning of the year had supplied them with a plausible pretext for denying it; since in the spring of the year 1818 a deliberate attempt was made to assassinate Wellington when returning in his carriage to his hotel in Paris, which was not, as one or two similar attempts apparently had been, the solitary act of some revengeful enthusiast, but the result of an extensive conspiracy, organized by a party who had fled from their own country to Brussels, and in which several ladies, among whom were some of high social position, were on good grounds believed to be accomplices. The man who fired the shot, happily unsuccessful, was, beyond a doubt, a non-commissioned officer of Napoleon's army, named Cantillon, whose guilt, in spite of the impossibility of obtaining evidence adequate to justify his legal conviction, was sufficiently proved at a later period by the fact of

* Capefigue, v., 361.

Napoleon himself, to his everlasting infamy, on his death-bed bequeathing him a considerable legacy as a reward for his attempt. But the French police and Wellington* himself conceived that there was great reason to complain of the remissness of the Belgian police and government, which had not only, in spite of engagements which their sovereign had entered into, and of orders which he had issued, permitted the continued residence so near the French frontier of persons known to be plotting against the French government, but who did all in their power to screen the criminals after the commission of their crime. For Wellington's opinion was that his life had been attempted, not so much from any feeling of animosity to him as a foreigner or a conqueror, "but "because he was the main support of the system of "tranquillity and order which it was wished to establish "in the world," and because his death appeared indispensable to the success of their projects for the overthrow of the King's ministry, and perhaps of his authority altogether.

But since he was as much above feelings of personal resentment as of personal interest, this occurrence, criminal as it was, made no difference in his judgment of what was best for the general welfare of France; and, having enforced his views with such weight as to command the assent of all the allied powers, he at the end of November 1818 carried them out, by disbanding the army, taking leave of it in a general order, in which he gracefully acknowledged the assistance which he had received from the foreign generals commanding the contingents of their respective countries; praised the excellent discipline which the troops in general had

* See his letter on the subject to Lord Clancarty (our ambassador at Brussels), Castlereagh Despatches, xi.

constantly maintained, and expressed his gratitude for their good conduct as that which alone had enabled him to discharge the duties entrusted to him with satisfaction and credit. And in the course of the next month he returned to England, to lay a fresh foundation for the respect and attachment of his countrymen by the exercise of civil virtues almost as remarkable as his military talents.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

He is made Master of the Ordnance—He opposes Roman Catholic Emancipation—Discontent in England—The Cato Street Conspiracy—The Queen arrives in England—Wellington on the part of the Cabinet negotiates with her advisers—Her trial, and death.

THE Roman satirist, in eulogizing the prosperity of him whom the patriots of imperial Rome were wont to regard as the greatest of their ancient generals, complained that the only thing wanting to his perfect happiness and glory was that he should have died when alighting from the triumphal car on which he had celebrated the last and greatest of his victories. And the officers of the French army, when retreating before Wellington in his first invasion of their country, without perhaps any knowledge of Juvenal's poem, expressed something of the same feeling with respect to their British conqueror, saying that he ought to die then, since he could never have another year of such good fortune as that which had seen him at its beginning in Portugal, and before its close the victorious invader of their own territory.

Happily his destiny was ordered otherwise; nor, though fortune and his own genius had still another

* Larpent, ii., 128.

year of military triumph in store for him, of which no Frenchman of any party could have conceived the possibility, even then was his glory exhausted; but it was his peculiar fortune, after having served his country for nearly a quarter of a century in the field, to render her a service of even longer duration at the council-board; and, great as his warlike achievements had been, to secure the attachment and respect of his countrymen as firmly by his civil virtues as he had formerly won their admiration and homage by the splendour of his military exploits.

His civil duties began at the first moment of his return home, as before the end of the year 1818 he succeeded Lord Mulgrave as Master of the Ordnance, and as such became a member of the Cabinet; at the deliberations of which body he was from the first a constant attendant, though some years elapsed before he took a prominent part in the debates of the House of Lords.

Once or twice only in 1819 did he come forward as a speaker, and his first speech was called forth by his professional zeal for the reputation of a brother officer, being a brief but energetic defence of Sir Thomas Hislop, the Commander-in-Chief of the army of the Deccan, who, when a vote of thanks to him for his military services had been proposed by the Prime Minister, was attacked by Lord Lansdowne for the execution of a native chief, the killedar or governor of Talnier, whom Hislop had hanged as a rebel, while Lord Lansdowne contended that for that crime he was only accountable to Holkar and not to us. Wellington maintained not only that Hislop's victory at Mehidpoor was of itself sufficient to entitle him to have his actions viewed with a partial eye, but that in the particular

case brought under the notice of Parliament, he had received the fullest approbation of the Governor-General, so that "he came before the House with a probable "evidence of innocence in his favour," and was therefore well entitled to its thanks for his military services.

His second speech concerned a matter of greater public interest, being made in opposition to a motion of Lord Donoughmore's, to take into consideration the civil disabilities which affected the Roman Catholics. This question, commonly known as that of "Catholic "Emancipation," had been the subject of one of his earliest speeches in the Irish House of Commons, and now, as then, he resisted the admission of the Roman Catholics to Parliament, stating at greater length than before, though still very briefly, the reasons which influenced his opinion. He did not rest his opposition on religious grounds, but on the influence which the Pope possessed over all Roman Catholics, especially over the adherents of that sect in Ireland, and on the difficulty which that influence threw in the way of providing sufficient security for the Protestant establishment in that country if Roman Catholics should be admitted to seats in Parliament. He argued that the violent manner in which the Reformation had been established in that island, and the confiscations by which it had been accompanied, which were still vivid in the recollection of that people, were facts that could not be excluded from consideration in dealing with the subject, since, in his opinion, no doubt could be entertained but that the first Parliamentary efforts of members professing the Roman Catholic form of religion would be directed towards the restoration of their Church to its original supremacy, and towards the recovery of the possessions of which it had been stripped by the Reformation. And

he contended that the views which he entertained on this subject were confirmed by the discontent shown by the Irish people at the control over the appointments to the Irish Roman Catholic bishoprics which the Pope had expressed his willingness to relinquish to the Crown. That discontent could only have been excited by their feeling that such a control would tend to the security of the Protestant Church; but "to secure that Church "as established at the Revolution was undoubtedly the "first and greatest duty of the Legislature."

It was many years before he again spoke in public on this subject, but the statesmanlike view which he thus expressed of its being a political and not a religious question showed that he was prepared to reconsider it more favourably at any future time when he might be better satisfied with the securities proposed for the maintenance of the Protestant establishment. And the language which he at all times held on the subject in private was that of one desirous to see the question adjusted, as being intimately connected with the tranquillity of Ireland, the position of affairs in which country, as will be seen hereafter, ultimately produced its settlement during his own administration.

For some time his private affairs, as was natural, especially in the case of one who had been so long absent from his native land, afforded him abundant employment. While in command of the army of occupation he had begun to interest himself in the education of his sons, and had sent them to Eton, under the care of an able private tutor,* whom Lord Wellesley's friend, the celebrated Provost Goodall, had recommended to him, and he paid constant visits to Eton, making

* The Rev. H. Wagner, now vicar of Brighton, to whose kindness the writer is indebted for many of the particulars mentioned in the text.

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inquiries into their progress. From their earliest childhood he had destined them for the army, or, as he himself expressed it, to serve the King; but he was desirous also that they should attain a respectable degree of scholarship, on which he placed a high value, being influenced perhaps in part by the early reputation which Lord Wellesley, of whose genius he was so naturally and justly proud, had acquired in that line. But the care which above all others he enjoined on Mr. Wagner was that they "should be brought up as Christian "gentlemen in all singleness and simplicity, and taught "to postpone every consideration to that of duty."

Next to this training of his children to do, as he hoped, good service to the State in future days, came his care for the estate which Parliament had conferred on him. Strathfieldsaye, which had been purchased from Lord Rivers, is on the borders of Berkshire and Hampshire, of which latter county the Duke had been lately appointed Lord-Lieutenant: and it had apparently been selected more because its price corresponded nearly with the sum intended to be laid out than in consequence of any other peculiar advantages which it presented; for the soil was bad, consisting chiefly of a deep, sour clay, which required a great outlay to render it fertile, while the circumstances of its former owner had not been such as to allow him to bestow on it any very elaborate or costly cultivation. The Duke, from his first entrance into possession of it, applied himself diligently to its improvement, and by a judicious liberality of expenditure in draining and manuring, gradually brought it into a condition of which it would formerly have not been thought susceptible; nor was his improvement of the property limited to those details which were calculated to enrich himself, but it extended in an equal

degree to those which concerned the comforts of his dependents. The farm-houses were enlarged and improved, and instead of the wooden cabins which had hitherto been thought sufficient shelter for the labourers on the estate, arose substantial and warm dwellings, with an ample space of garden-ground assigned to each, at a reduced rent;* so that the condition of the husbandmen soon became a model for other landlords, and an object of envy to all those of the same class in the county where as yet there had been no example of such judicious liberality and humanity.

The year 1819, the last of the long and chequered reign of George III., at one time seemed likely to call forth the exercise of Wellington's military talents in his own land. The reaction produced by the cessation of the war, by the necessary resumption of cash payments, and by other circumstances, had produced a great amount of distress among the working classes, which not unnaturally led to discontent. Nor were selfish and artful demagogues wanting to direct this feeling of dissatisfaction against the wealthier classes and the Government of the country. The consequence was that in many parts of the kingdom, especially in the manufacturing districts, alarming riots took place, some of which could not be quelled without the interposition of the military, and some loss of life among the rioters. And there appeared for a while great reason to apprehend that the feeling of disaffection might be exasperated rather than intimidated by the efforts thus made to repress it, and that it might spread to Scotland, where the means of checking it were even more scanty than in England. So greatly had the army been reduced, that Sir John Byng,† one of

* Caird's 'English Agriculture,' p. 97.

† The present Lord Strafford.

Wellington's Peninsular veterans, who commanded in the northern districts of England, had only four regiments of cavalry and infantry under his orders; and the force in Scotland was smaller still, till Portsmouth, which had never before been left undefended for a moment, was stripped of its garrison to reinforce the handful of men who were required to prevent or to suppress the threatened outbreak of the weavers of Paisley and Glasgow. At such a crisis the abilities of the Duke were invaluable to his colleagues. He was not Commander-in-Chief, but it was not a time for scrupulous punctiliousness; and when he volunteered to furnish Byng with suggestions for the disposal of his troops, his offer was at once thankfully accepted. The instructions which he in consequence drew up were written off-hand in the Home Office, apparently without a moment's consideration; yet so minute were they in their details, so full of provisions for every possible difficulty or emergency, that when they were submitted to the authorities at the Horse Guards, the Duke of York pronounced them perfect; and if active operations had unhappily been required, they would have been adopted as the basis of all military measures in the disturbed districts.

But his foreseeing capacity as an administrator was not contented with measures of repression only; he desired prevention still more; and with this view he earnestly pressed on the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, the desirableness of putting the laws against "training" in execution, and of furnishing the county magistrates with powers sufficient to enforce their observance.* And the reasoning by which he recommended his suggestions will apply to every instance in which a credulous populace wavers between loyalty and insurrection. He told his

* 'Life of Lord Sidmouth,' iii., 293.

colleagues that a very small force would be sufficient if vigorously displayed at first; that "impression on "either side was everything; that if a stop were at once "put to all proceedings of the insurgents" (for he did not scruple to give them this name) "they would be lost, "their adherents would lose all confidence, and by degrees "the people would relapse into their old habits of loyalty "or indifference; while, on the other hand, the moment "that the loyal saw that there was a law which could "prevent the practices of the disaffected; and means, "inclination, and determination to carry it into execu-"tion, they would regain courage." In fact, he felt sure that the mere display of the troops would prevent the necessity of using them. There can be no doubt that such advice was the truest wisdom, such vigour the truest mercy. Insurrection is like the Fame described by the poet—

Every moment brings
New vigour to her flight, new pinions to her wings;*

or like a conflagration, easy to be extinguished at first, but if allowed to continue and spread, then not to be quenched till it has involved innocent and guilty in one common ruin.

A month, however, had not elapsed from the date of the letter which contained these suggestions when it appeared that dangerous as was the discontent in the northern counties, there was even more peril to the State, and far more wickedness, in the secret conspiracies which desperate men were hatching in the metropolis. The year 1820 had scarcely opened when Lord Sidmouth received information of a plot having been formed to massacre the King's ministers, to set fire simultaneously

* Parva metu primum, mox sese attollit in auras.
Æn. iv., 171. Dryden's translation.

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to all the barracks in the metropolis, to seize the artillery, to storm the Mansion House, the Bank, and the Tower, and to establish a republican form of government. Wellington, not knowing how numerous the accomplices in the design might be, but seeing clearly that the leaders must have reckoned on great numbers of followers before they could conceive the practicability of so widely-extended a plan of operations, at once offered his services to be employed by the Government in any manner at a moment's notice. But different circumstances, among which was the death of the King, which occurred at the end of the month, and interrupted the dinners of the cabinet, which usually take place at that season, and one of which had been designed to be the occasion of the murder of the ministers, postponed the explosion of the conspiracy till the end of February; and by that time a more complete revelation of the designs of the conspirators enabled their threatened victims to defeat them by the agency of humbler instruments than the great general. As is well known, a magistrate and a few policemen, with the aid of a handful of soldiers, arrested the ringleaders of the gang at the moment that they were preparing for the perpetration of their ruthless and treasonable plot, and the complete disclosure of their atrocious intentions, and the conviction and execution of the most guilty conspirators, greatly strengthened the government which they had hoped to subvert.

The evil spirit, however, was as yet far from being effectually laid. Committees of disaffected persons were still holding frequent meetings in various parts of the kingdom, and again Lord Sidmouth had recourse to the Duke for counsel,* laying before him all his apprehensions of a formidable outbreak, to oppose which there

* Sidmouth's Life, iii., 325.

was actually no military force whatever at the disposal of the ministers. It had been natural of course that, as an army of the same magnitude as that which had been required for the war against Napoleon was no longer needed in the happier period of peace, a great reduction in the number of troops employed should have taken place since the glorious day of Waterloo had relieved the kingdom from its fear, and consequently from all necessity for such costly exertions as it had then put forth; but so injudiciously excessive had been the retrenchments which had ensued (against which, as we have already seen, Wellington had made energetic remonstrance, even before he quitted Paris for Cambray, in 1815) that now the Commander-in-Chief had not a single regiment at his disposal to meet any sudden emergency, unless he withdrew one from some customary and important service in which it was always engaged. The Duke's advice was at once to call out the militia throughout the entire kingdom; and he was anxious that, even after the existing disturbances should have been put down, this force should be kept in a state of organization, since, if judiciously managed, it would form a cheap and efficient nursery for the regular army in the event of any return of war. His suggestions, however, were not adopted, partly, it is said, because the Government doubted the loyalty of the classes from which the militia must have been drawn; but they began greatly to increase the yeomanry, of whose trustworthiness there was less question. As the spring returned the distress began to abate, and with the exception of an outbreak in Scotland, of so trivial a character that it was quelled by a body of twenty soldiers, there was no violation of the peace of the kingdom connected with these treasonable associations; while, as

soon as the danger had passed away, the Government acted with judicious lenity, and contented itself with bringing a very few of the most prominent leaders to trial, and with the infliction of imprisonment, generally for no very protracted period, on those who were convicted.

It was well that these troubles passed away so easily; for tranquillity had scarcely been restored when the whole kingdom was thrown afresh into a state of excitement by an event from the consequences of which no one connected with it escaped without considerable discredit. The King, who nearly a quarter of a century before had married the Princess Caroline of Brunswick, had separated from her almost immediately after his marriage; and for the last few years she had been living in different parts of the Continent, chiefly in Italy, where her conduct had been such as to give rise to very general scandal. It became at last so flagrant that the ministers sent instructions to our ambassadors at the different continental courts to withhold from her all official marks of respect; while even her own principal friends and advisers in England were unable to counsel her to complain of such treatment, but were desirous that she should agree, on the condition of a sufficient income being secured to her, to fix her residence abroad for the remainder of her life. The Prince Regent, on the contrary (for the discussion of the subject had begun before the death of George III.), was desirous of procuring a divorce, to which insuperable obstacles were presented by his own mode of life; since it was perfectly notorious that, whether the infidelity of the Princess to his bed could or could not be proved, he himself had not set her an example which could entitle him to complain of her misbehaviour. The

ministers consequently resisted his proposal, and at last the matter was compromised for the moment by his agreeing not to renew it while the Princess remained abroad, and by their promising to attempt to procure him a divorce in the event of her returning to England.

The proposal, however, which had been made to the ministers on her behalf by her friends, the most active and able of whom was Mr. Brougham, at that time one of the most eminent advocates at the English bar, and since more widely known as Lord Brougham, the Chancellor in Lord Grey's administration, was made without her privity; and her subsequent actions showed that she was not inclined to adopt it, or any other step which should involve an abandonment of her claims to share at least her husband's rank when he should ascend the throne. When that event did happen, the ministers, in deference to the new sovereign's wishes, consented to omit all mention of her name as Queen in the customary prayer for the royal family; and looking on this omission as an open insult, the more flagrant because, till the death of the late King, she had been constantly prayed for as Princess of Wales, she made a formal demand for the insertion of her new title in its usual place in the Liturgy; and on receiving a refusal, she announced her intention of returning to England, and gave notice of her purpose to the ministers, in order, as she said, that a palace might be prepared for her reception.

The news, as may well be imagined, caused the greatest perplexity to the Cabinet: and probably not much less to her Majesty's own advisers. There was no doubt that these last considered a compromise which should have the effect of suppressing all investigation into her conduct (as long as it was understood that

such a suppression implied no admission on her part of the truth of the charges brought against her) the step most advisable for herself as well as for the kingdom at large. The ministers too, who, in the event of any formal investigation, dreaded her advocates recriminating upon their royal master, were even more anxious than they for an amicable solution of the difficulty: but the principals on each side were too proud, too obstinate, and too much embittered against one another to allow their well-meant endeavours to succeed. The efforts of well-wishers to the country independent of either party were equally fruitless. On the 7th of June, the day after the news of the Queen's landing at Dover reached London, Lord Castlereagh had moved the House of Commons to appoint a Committee to examine documents referring to her conduct which the Government were prepared to submit to it. Brougham opposed the motion with vehemence; and the debate threatened to become warm, when Wilberforce, to whom his undoubted sincerity of purpose, and the renown arising from his former success in the glorious cause to which he had so long devoted himself, gave great weight with all parties, interposed and procured an adjournment to give time for negotiation, which it was hoped might lead to some amicable termination of the dispute. In the House of Lords, the ministers succeeded in at once procuring the nomination of a Committee; but before it could meet, the Queen sent a message to Lord Liverpool, to inform him that "she was ready to consider "any arrangement consistent with her dignity and "honour."

The result of this message was that on the 14th the Duke and Lord Castlereagh were appointed by the Cabinet to discuss the whole subject with Mr. Brougham

and Mr. Denman, who had been invested with the formal rank of the Queen's attorney and solicitor-general: and several conferences took place, which were conducted on both sides with great temper and moderation, as well as with consummate prudence and address, but which wholly failed in their desired object; since the Queen directed her advocates to insist either on the restoration of her name to the Liturgy, or on her introduction to some foreign court by the British ambassador resident in the country, in such a manner "as might "protect her against the unfavourable inference to "which she might otherwise have been liable in leaving "the country under the circumstances in which she was "placed."* To this demand the ministers were compelled to refuse their consent. Their original proposal had been, that in whatever country she might select as her future abode, she should reside under some inferior title, in the same way that sovereigns often travel *incognito*; and Canning had urged in the House of Commons that such a step on her part would imply no abandonment of her "claim to the rank and dignity of Queen." But as this plan was peremptorily rejected, they offered that, "in order the better to assure her every suitable "respect and attention, the King would cause official "notification to be made of her legal character as Queen "to the Government of such State" as she selected for her residence; though "it must rest with the sovereign "of such State what reception should be given to her "Majesty in that character."

This concession, however, was refused as insufficient. As a last resource, to avert the public scandal which now seemed almost inevitable, Wilberforce again interposed, moving two resolutions to be presented to her

* Protocol of the conference held June 17, 1820. 'Ann. Reg.' 1820, p. 162.

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Majesty, expressing the deep regret of the House at the failure of the late negotiations; asserting "the inesti-
"mable importance of an amicable and final adjustment
"of the present unhappy differences;" and assuring her Majesty, that her forbearing to insist further "on those
"demands with respect to which disagreement had
"arisen, would be regarded, not as arising from any
"disposition to shrink from inquiry, but from a wish to
"give up her own judgment to the authority of the
"House of Commons." He argued very fairly that such an address from such a body would, as an exculpation of her conduct, be of more value than an introduction to any court in Europe. And he had great reason to hope that she would yield to its prayer, not only because she had already made a public declaration of her willingness to yield to the declared sense of the House of Commons, but also because he had received a letter from Mr. Brougham, in which he "pledged
"himself that she would accede to the address"* which Wilberforce designed to propose.

The resolutions were carried by an immense majority. But, when the address founded on them was presented to the Queen, to the surprise and dismay of the deputation appointed to convey it she positively refused to make the slightest abatement in her demands; and declared that, in spite of her sense of the kind intention and "affectionate language of the House of Commons,
"this question was one which must be decided by her
"own feelings and conscience, and by them alone." Even Wilberforce admitted that the ministers, in the situation in which the question was now placed, had no alternative but to carry on the threatened inquiry; and it was decided to proceed by a Bill of Pains and Penalties

* Wilberforce's Life, vol. v., p. 65.

for the degradation of her Majesty from her royal rank, which at the beginning of July was introduced into the House of Lords; that course being adopted because the Upper House, as the highest court of judicature in the kingdom, had the power to examine witnesses on oath.

In the discussions which arose on the subject, the Duke of Wellington, though he had played so important a part in the preceding negotiations, took no share whatever. He voted, however, for the second reading of the bill, which was carried by a moderate majority,* after a protracted examination of witnesses brought forward to sustain or to rebut the charges brought against her Majesty; and also for the third reading, in which the ministers, though successful, were supported by such scanty numbers † that they declined introducing the bill into the Lower House, which was almost certain to regard it with even still less favour.

Nearly three hundred years had elapsed since any event had taken place so greatly calculated to lower royalty in the eyes of the people. There was probably scarcely one individual of sense and candour in the whole kingdom who doubted the substantial truth of the imputations sought to be cast upon the Queen: but very many disbelieved a considerable portion of the proofs by which it was endeavoured to sustain those imputations; and not a few believed that the indiscretion of the agents who had been sent to Italy to collect evidence, their want of sagacity and care in sifting it, and their undisguised eagerness to listen to accusations of all kinds, had sharpened not only the memory but the invention of the witnesses, and tempted them to swear to the truth of many assertions which were not only false

* The numbers were, for the second reading, 123; against it, 95.

† 106 for, 99 against the bill.

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but incredible. However, the imprudence of the Queen's partisans came to the relief of and greatly strengthened the Government. The abandonment of the Bill of Pains and Penalties had been an escape for their client: they tried to represent it as a triumph; and believing the Commons to be more favourable to her than the Lords, they endeavoured to push the advantage which they claimed to have gained to an extent at which the common sense of the House and of the people in general revolted. The consequence was, that in two or three motions which they ventured to make in condemnation of the conduct of the Ministry in reference to the bill, and in support of the Queen's right to have her name restored to the Liturgy, they were defeated by far greater majorities than had been obtained by the Government in the House of Lords. And when at the coronation, which took place in July, 1821, she first claimed to be crowned at the same time with the King as a right, which claim was easily shown to be wholly unsupported by precedent,* and afterwards, on the day appointed for the solemnity, endeavoured to force her way into Westminster Abbey, in the hope, apparently, of causing some confusion and some annoyance to her husband, the people showed the most complete indifference to, if one may not rather say an approval of her repulse; and this proof of the entire loss of her popularity, caused her such deep mortification, that it brought on a fever, which caused her death within a very few weeks.

* Twiss's 'Life of Lord Eldon,' ii., 420.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Wellington is made Lord High Constable — Death of Lord Castlereagh — Wellington is sent to the Congress of Verona—The miserable condition of Spain—The eagerness of France to interfere in that country—The French invade Spain—Wellington predicts their success—He is attacked by the Opposition for his conduct at Verona.

IN the pageant of the coronation, which, to gratify the magnificent tastes of the sovereign about to be crowned, was celebrated on a scale of unparalleled splendour, Wellington bore a conspicuous part, being invested with the rank of Lord High Constable of the Kingdom, and laying aside his well-won marshal's truncheon to bear in its stead the staff once swayed by the warlike hands of Mortimer and of Bohun, but which had now been disused for three long centuries, since its last holder, Buckingham, the last of the Plantagenets, had laid down his life on Tower Hill to tranquillize the jealous fears of the merciless Henry.* And in the autumn of the same year he bore even a more prominent part in a scene in which the King took a great interest; for

* The first Constable of England was Mortimer, one of the most renowned knights of the Conqueror. After a time the dignity was made hereditary in the Bohuns, Earls of Hereford; from whom it passed, by the female line, to the Dukes of Buckingham, the last of whom was beheaded by Henry VIII. in 1521.

his Majesty, thinking it proper to visit his continental dominions, decided on passing through Belgium on his way, in order to visit the field of Waterloo, and naturally selected the Duke as his attendant on such an occasion. On that scene of his greatest glory, the invincible field-marshal showed his King "how fields were won;" and never had veteran a more attentive listener. On the centre of the ridge which had been occupied by the British army, the King of the Netherlands had erected a bronze statue of a lion, to perpetuate at once the memory of the victory and of the people who had won it; but that was not the object which fixed the notice of the royal visitor. He turned rather to the shattered walls of Hougoumont, which, still blackened with smoke, and pierced and crumbled by bullets, gave enduring tokens of the sternness of the valour with which his gallant Guards had maintained that desperate post. He turned to the ridges from which Milhaud and Ney had been repulsed; on which the light division had crushed the advancing Guard, or the cheer of the Highlanders had rung forth, while many of them rushed forward from their ranks to join their countrymen of the Grays in their irresistible charge. And doubtless with still deeper interest did the monarch gaze on the spots where Picton fell, and where Ponsonby almost counterbalanced the advantage gained in his unequalled onset by his own too glorious death.

It was soon proposed to employ his talents in a more active sphere. Ireland, at no time tranquil, had of late been more than ever a prey to disturbances, having an origin partly agrarian and partly religious, and dexterously fomented by a barrister named O'Connell, who, though utterly devoid of those qualities which procure respect from educated or sensible men, was largely

endowed with those talents which make an impression on a populace, and especially on one of so excitable a character as the Irish. His eloquence was always fluent, always addressed with eminent art and tact to the passions of such hearers, sometimes even glowing with the fervour of an apparently genuine feeling. He had also a portly, commanding presence, a sonorous and clear voice, and a vehemence of manner which to careless observers might well seem a proof of sincerity. And since it had not yet become manifest how wholly he made his varied endowments instruments for the gratification of selfish and sordid purposes of private gain, his character stood far higher than that of his fellow-demagogues in our own island. It was evident that a firmer hand than that of the existing viceroy, Lord Talbot, was required to tranquillize the disaffection which, if left unchecked, threatened no small peril to the kingdom at large. And Lord Sidmouth, who alone of his colleagues, with the exception of Lord Castlereagh, as yet appreciated the great civil abilities of the Duke, urged Lord Liverpool to send him to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant. The Cabinet, however, preferred his brother, Lord Wellesley, whose great capacity for government had already been fully tested, and who now carried to the rule of his native land the same great qualities of sagacity, firmness, and impartiality which had made his Indian administration so successful and so glorious. Of the fearless fairness with which he now swayed the vice-regal authority, it is sufficient to say, that while the enmity subsisting between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants was so great that no one could possibly please both parties, Lord Wellesley did the next best thing, and dissatisfied both; the Orangemen accusing him as a secret partisan of the

Papists; O'Connell and his followers reviling him as a Saxon and an Orangeman at heart; while it was clear that his lenity to each of the opposing factions proceeded from no want of vigour or resolution, but both were awed into a comparatively decent peacefulness by the decision with which he at the same time demanded from the Home Government ample powers for the repression of both in language which, when compared with the previous actions of the man, plainly showed that he would not fear, if need should arise, fully to exert them.

In the autumn of the year 1822, Wellington was called upon again to exert his diplomatic abilities. A congress of statesmen was about to be held on the Continent, and the matters to be discussed were of such importance that it had been intended that Lord Castlereagh, who, in consequence of his father's death, had lately succeeded to the marquisate of Londonderry, should himself represent England at its deliberations. But this intention was frustrated by a melancholy calamity; a pressure on the brain, caused by incessant labours in his office, produced a temporary aberration of mind, during which he put an end to his existence; leaving behind him a reputation which, like that of his great master, Pitt, has been constantly rising since his death.* During his lifetime his want of eloquence gave an

* See especially a, generally speaking, very fair sketch of him by Lord Brougham, in his 'Statesmen of George III.,' who considers his reputation as a statesman materially but unjustly lowered by his singular and often ridiculous incapacity as a speaker. Perhaps, however, it might be hard to produce a more real proof of the greatness of his practical capacity, and of his substantial vigour of mind and honesty of purpose, without which no one ever attains any real ascendency over others, than is supplied by the fact of the great influence which, in spite of his want of oratorical power, he possessed over the House of Commons, which has often, in former times, been accused of being too much swayed by the showy gifts of eloquence, in preference to the more useful endowments of practical wisdom.

apparent colour to the sneers of those who sought to raise an opinion of their own capacity by disparaging his: while others mistakenly reproached him as having sanctioned the formation and approved the objects of the Holy Alliance. But it is now notorious that he was neither deceived by the pretexts of the framers of that league, nor favourable to their designs, but that from the first he protested against them; and the sagacity with which he kept us independent of that unjust and mischievous confederacy, the firmness and judgment with which he maintained the war against Napoleon, and the happy union of energy and liberality which distinguished his domestic policy well deserve to secure him a very high rank among the statesmen of his country.

The vacancy thus made at the Foreign Office was not unattended with perplexity to the Cabinet. If pre-eminent fitness for the post had been the only point to be considered, there could have been no doubt that the seals would at once have been entrusted to Mr. Canning. But though beyond all question or comparison the ablest statesman in the kingdom, he was personally obnoxious to the King. In the summer of 1820, though President of the Board of Control, he had carefully disconnected himself from the proceedings against the Queen; and in the winter of the same year, seeing no means of preserving his neutrality * between her injudicious advisers and the King's Government, he had resigned his office. He had since accepted the post of Governor-General of India; and was actually on the point of sailing to that distant land, which to him would have been a place of most unsuitable exile, when Lord Londonderry's death changed his destination. Lord

* Wilberforce's Life, v., p. 81.—Lord Dudley's Letters, Dec. 1820.

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Liverpool at once named him to the King as the only possible successor of that nobleman; but Canning was also dreaded by a portion of the Cabinet, on account of his steady advocacy of the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities; and they were desirous that Mr. Peel, who on the retirement of Lord Sidmouth in the preceding winter, had become Secretary of State for the Home Department, should now have the lead in the House of Commons assigned to him: while, without that lead, it was quite certain that Canning would refuse the seals of the Foreign Office, as he had done before, even in Castlereagh's lifetime. Their exertions, seconded by the King's personal antipathy, had nearly prevailed, when the Duke, seeing in their success the probable dissolution of the Ministry, and fully appreciating the superiority of Canning's abilities, though he himself was opposed to his views on the Catholic question, undertook to overcome the scruples of his royal master.* His arguments, and the fearless, though respectful resolution with which he urged them, succeeded, and Canning became the Foreign Secretary, and for the rest of his life the most important person in the Government.

The first question which claimed the consideration of the new minister was the selection of the plenipotentiary to proceed to the Congress, to which Lord Londonderry, as has been mentioned, had designed to have gone himself. It was obvious that his successor, as yet unacquainted with the recent transactions of his new office, could not possibly be spared for the same purpose, and the person now selected was the Duke, who at once accepted the commission, and quitted England on his honourable embassy at very brief notice, bearing with him the very same instructions for his conduct which had been

* Guizot's Peel, p. 22.

previously drawn up by the Cabinet for the guidance of Lord Londonderry himself. So little difference was there between the line of policy which Canning adopted and that which his predecessor, so often vilified for his subservience to the views of the absolute monarchs of the Continent, had resolved to pursue* on the questions about to be discussed.

The Congress now about to be opened was the third that had taken place within two years; the first of its predecessors, which had been held at Troppau, had been attended on the part of Great Britain by Sir Charles Stuart,† and had been occupied chiefly by the considerations of the disturbances in Italy, where secret revolutionary societies, the most numerous and formidable of which was that known as I Carbonari, had effected revolutions at Naples and in the kingdom of Sardinia, had compelled the kings both at Naples and at Turin to abdicate, and had established in each kingdom the Spanish Constitution of 1812. And at the second Congress, held at Laybach, in Styria, the Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia, had decided on interfering to quell these insurrections, which they looked upon as dangerous to the cause of monarchy in general; and in execution of this resolution they had poured such armies into the Italian peninsula as the revolutionary party had no power to resist. The deposed monarchs were easily restored, but the severities which they exercised towards the disaffected, and the fact of many of their principal towns being still occupied as a measure of precaution by garrisons of the foreign troops which had re-established their authority, kept the discontent alive, and it was not difficult to

* Stapleton's 'Political Life of Canning,' i., 299.

† The present Lord Stuart de Rothesay.

foresee fresh disturbances whenever those troops should be withdrawn.

These affairs, and the relations of Russia with Turkey, which had been rendered uneasy by the progress of the insurrection in Greece, which will be mentioned hereafter, were expected to be the chief subjects of deliberation at the present Congress, which was to be held in the first instance at Vienna. It was known that it was intended that after discussing the affairs of Turkey at Vienna, the plenipotentiaries should adjourn to Verona, for the purpose of deciding on the spot the Italian questions which should arise. And Canning, who was well aware that British interests were intimately concerned in the peaceful solution of the questions in dispute between Russia and Turkey, but who also thought with equal justice any armed interference in the affairs of Italy objectionable in principle, originally desired that Wellington, after taking his part in the discussions at Vienna, should return home, and leave the continental sovereigns to come to their own decision respecting the affairs of Italy without the countenance of a British ambassador.* But the Duke, on passing through Paris on his way to Vienna, learnt from a conversation with M. de Villèle, the French prime minister, that the French plenipotentiary was instructed to bring the situation of affairs in Spain under the notice of the Congress at Verona; and he consequently wrote to Canning for fresh instructions. Before they arrived, he himself was seized with a slight illness, which delayed his journey for some days, so that when he arrived at Vienna, he found the Congress there on the point of adjourning to its Italian place of meeting, and in pursuance of his new orders he accompanied it to Verona.

* Stapleton's Canning, i., 142.

Spain, which was the country from which the Italian states had immediately caught the contagion of revolution, had not been materially improved in its internal tranquillity and prosperity by the termination of the war against Napoleon. Ferdinand, the restored King, was not himself a wise prince, and we have already seen that in the opinion of Wellington, whose intimate acquaintance with Spaniards of all classes and parties had given him abundant opportunity for forming a correct judgment on the subject, the country was wholly devoid of judicious and able counsellors for a monarch whom many circumstances of the loss and recovery of his kingdom surrounded with more than usual difficulties. Accordingly his first measures were marked with features of an inconsistent tyranny, which is a sure proof of weakness. He issued a public declaration that he abhorred despotism, that it was inconsistent with the constitution of the kingdom, and with all the principles on which it ought to be or ever had been governed; and then he proceeded by his own despotic authority to establish absolute government over the whole of Spain. He pronounced, with truth, the constitution of the existing Cortes, which excluded the nobles and clergy from that body, illegal; promising, however, in the same decree in which he dissolved it, to convoke a fresh Cortes, and to permit it to discuss with him the future government of the nation; but he took no steps whatever to fulfil this promise, disregarded the petitions which from many most respectable quarters flowed in upon him entreating him to adhere to it, and soon gave himself up to the dictation of a few bigoted priests, at whose instigation he re-established the Inquisition, restored many of the most obnoxious privileges of the nobles, and sought to silence all opposition by a decree which declared every one who should be convicted of even speaking in disapproval of

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his measures liable to the punishment of death, to be inflicted by a court-martial.* Nor was this decree suffered to remain altogether a dead letter. A great number of persons were arrested under it and sentenced to imprisonment or to the gallows, while still more fled from a land in which there was neither liberty of action nor of speech, nor even always safety in inaction or obscurity. There were, however, many resolute men who would neither submit nor flee; and some of the guerrilla chieftains, who were even joined by many officers of the regular army, openly raised the standard of revolt. The King became alarmed, but his alarm only produced increased vacillation in his conduct. First he tried measures of severity, then he dismissed some of his most obnoxious ministers, and appeared inclined to conciliate the Constitutionalists; but he soon repented of his moderation, and began again to fill the jails in every part of the kingdom with prisoners, among whom were many persons of high rank and consideration; and many against whom the judges pronounced that there was no evidence sufficient to justify their conviction; while, as if on purpose to mark the unchangeable character of his future policy, he re-introduced the Jesuits into the kingdom, restoring to them the greater part of their former possessions, and committing to them the education of the rising generation.

Measures such as these were not likely to produce permanent tranquillity. Fresh and more formidable conspiracies were formed, in some of which large bodies of troops were implicated; and at last, in 1819, the disaffection among the military spread to such an extent that the army, which was assembled at Cadiz, in order to embark for America, and to act against the Spanish

* 'Annual Register,' 1814.

colonies in that quarter of the globe, which had asserted their independence, broke out into open revolt. To add to Ferdinand's troubles, he was in extreme want of money; though he procured a temporary supply by the sale of Florida to the United States for 1,250,000*l.*, the sums thus obtained were soon exhausted; and the knowledge of the distress of the Government encouraged the malcontents to bolder measures. By the beginning of 1820, the flame of insurrection had spread over the whole kingdom, and Ferdinand, at last seriously terrified, released the prisoners confined for political offences, convoked the Cortes, formed a new ministry composed wholly of leaders of the revolutionary party, and took a public oath to observe the Constitution of 1812.

But his concessions, as is often the case with those wrung from tyrants, came too late, and did little more than show the democratic party their strength. Local juntas and revolutionary clubs arose in many of the principal cities; under their influence the new Cortes was elected, and, as might have been expected, consisted almost wholly of partisans of the new Constitution. It was in vain that in one or two towns the army still adhered to Ferdinand; the imprudent violence of the officers, which led them to fire on the people, only exasperated the citizens, and the King was weakened by the exertions of his own adherents in his favour.

The Cortes had been elected under such a system of intimidation that very few of the higher classes, or of moderate opinions, were included among its members; nevertheless, some of their earliest measures were honestly designed to remove many of the evils which pressed most heavily on the kingdom, and which most tended to excite and to keep alive disaffection. They renewed the laws against the Jesuits; they abolished

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some of the most offensive privileges of the nobles; they bridled the power of the clergy and of the ecclesiastical orders, more numerous in Spain than in any other country in Europe; and they made great, though unsuccessful efforts to raise the revenue to a sum which should be adequate to the expenses of the Government. They endeavoured also to put down the revolutionary clubs, the existence of which was incompatible with a vigorous government of any kind; but they soon found that in so doing they were provoking a contest with a foe more powerful than themselves, which soon openly defied both them and the King, and which began to talk without disguise of dethroning him by force if he should presume in any particular to oppose the will of the nation, of which they constituted themselves the sole interpreters. Ferdinand began to fear not only for his throne but for his life: he retired to the Escurial; the populace compelled him to return to Madrid; yet even after this proof of his own utter powerlessness, because, on one occasion when a mob insulted him as he drove through the streets, and threw stones at his carriage, the guards who formed his escort dispersed them by force of arms, he was terrified into disbanding that force, though the only one on whose allegiance he could at all rely; and from that time forth he dared not appear in public, but shut himself up as a prisoner in his own palace. Presently the weariness which he felt at his confinement grew more insupportable than the terror which had driven him to it, and he again appeared in public, asserting his rights in haughty language and by violent measures; but his language was petulant and inconsistent, and his measures he recalled almost as soon as he had announced them. Such conspicuous weakness naturally encouraged the favourers of revolution to

measures of greater audacity; and, becoming determined to show the King the hopelessness of further resistance, the clubs sent out large bodies of armed men in different parts of the kingdom, who seized his most eminent adherents, and without any trial at once put them on board vessels which transported them to the different Spanish islands: while at the same time, so completely had they overborne the Cortes, that that body did not dare to offer even a remonstrance. Meanwhile, the most violent outrages and murders, some accompanied with the forms of law, were rife in every direction, and especially at Madrid. Fresh conspiracies broke out, and fresh insurrections, though so atrocious had been the conduct of the clubs, and so general the terror which they had inspired, that some of the bands which now appeared in arms declared for Ferdinand, who being again seized with a paroxysm of firmness, appointed General Murillo, who had served in the Peninsular war with some distinction, to the command of the army; and he, behaving with judicious resolution, had for a brief time some considerable success in checking the revolutionists of the capital. But in the provinces the revolutionary spirit prevailed more and more, till its prompters began openly to threaten to make war upon the metropolis. The King again took fright and changed some of his ministers, while many of his remaining adherents fled across the Pyrenees and sought safety in France.

In the spring of 1822 a fresh Cortes was elected, who soon showed a spirit far more unfriendly to Ferdinand than that of their predecessors, and even proposed to bring Murillo to trial for the death of the citizens who had fallen in some of the riots which he had quelled. But as they became more violent, the royalist party also

gained strength from their excesses, and the King's cause was espoused by several large bodies of armed men, chiefly under priestly or peasant leaders, many of whom, like the guerrilla chieftains in the former war, displayed considerable military talents. By the end of the summer, civil war was openly raging over the whole of the northern provinces, but the pusillanimous vacillation of the King rendered the exertions of his adherents of little avail, and his affairs grew worse and worse rapidly. The royal guard, almost the only portion of the regular army on whose steadiness he could rely, were forced to retire from Madrid, and while encamped in the neighbourhood, were attacked by a large force of militia and were almost destroyed. Some regiments in Andalusia, which attempted to make a stand against the insurgents, met with but little better fortune. Ferdinand fled to San Ildefonso, and there submitted to all the demands of the revolutionists, appointing a new ministry at their dictation, who proceeded to the most cruel treatment of those royalists who fell into their power, putting many of them to death for their efforts in his cause; while on the other hand those of his partisans who still kept the war alive in the north refused any longer to acknowledge his authority, and appointed a Regency to administer the government while he should continue, as they not untruly affirmed him to be at present, in captivity.

The Regency, however, had but a brief existence. Mina, who had been placed at the head of the revolutionary army, showed a degree of skill and likewise of cruelty far exceeding that of any of his antagonists. His skill speedily forced their principal stronghold, the well-fortified town of Castelfollit, and the atrocious ferocity with which he massacred the garrison and even

the unarmed population, terrified other places into unresisting submission, till, after one or two combats in the field in which they were invariably unsuccessful, the royalist leaders abandoned the struggle and fled into France, leaving the Government, and even the person of the King, in the hands of those who certainly bore the most determined hostility to his authority, and, as many feared, but little goodwill towards his person.

It was not strange that these events should make a deep impression in France, where the events of the last thirty years had naturally inspired the higher classes with a horror of revolution of any kind; and where the relationship, though now somewhat remote, of the reigning families, disposed the King himself to view the insults offered to his royal kinsman with a deeper interest and a still more resolute antipathy. And consequently, when Wellington arrived at Verona, he found that the French plenipotentiary pressed the consideration of the state of Spain on the other members of the Congress with an urgency which, when coupled with the posture that his country had already assumed, made it in effect the principal subject of deliberation. For France had already begun to move troops towards the Pyrenees, and to form an army, the duties of which were nominally defensive, and, in profession at least, were dictated mainly by sanitary precautions to prevent the entrance into the country of persons from the infected districts of Spain; since, in addition to the political troubles of that unhappy land, some of its northern provinces had been visited by the yellow fever, which was committing fearful ravages among their population. But the French ministers, who dreaded the contagious character of the political principles now dominant in

Spain more than that of any bodily fever, were desirous to send that army across the frontier to re-establish Ferdinand's authority by force, and to obtain the sanction of the Congress for such interference.

It was no secret that the chief opposition which would be made to such a line of conduct would come from Great Britain; since nearly two years before, when the continental sovereigns were resolving to employ force against the Neapolitan revolutionists, Lord Castlereagh had instructed our ambassadors at the different courts to declare, that though "the British Government had "no hesitation in expressing a strong disapprobation "of the revolution in question," nevertheless the measures proposed to be adopted "were diametrically op-"posed to the fundamental laws of Great Britain," and that such intervention in the internal affairs of other nations could not "be reconciled either with the "general interests, or with the real authority and dig-"nity of independent sovereigns." He therefore declared that his country would take no part in any such interference. And in strict accordance with the wise principles thus expressed were the instructions which just before his lamented death he had submitted to the Cabinet as the rules for his own guidance at Verona; and which, after that event, were given to the Duke of Wellington. His successor, Canning, was as resolute a champion as himself of the great rule of non-interference. And as soon as he received the letter which Wellington wrote to him from Paris, and learnt from it the views of the French Cabinet, as far as they were likely to be submitted to the Congress, he instructed the Duke on the part of Great Britain to refuse all connection with any forcible interference in the affairs of Spain from any quarter whatever, "even though the

"dissolution of the alliance should be the consequence "of his refusal."*

Such clear and resolute instructions needed a resolute and unswerving agent, and they could hardly have been entrusted to better hands to carry them out. Russia, desirous to find any pretext for interfering in the affairs of Western Europe, was eager to see an invasion of Spain by a French army, and would gladly have borne a part in it herself; while Austria, though strongly disinclined to see a Russian force march through Germany, was so embarrassed by her connections with and also by some fear of Russia, that she seemed likely to offer but a feeble opposition to projects which indeed too much resembled the measures of which she herself had approved at Laybach. In this dilemma, Wellington's firmness gave a momentary strength and consistency to her councils; and encouraged Prussia, which country was also greatly influenced by fear of its northern neighbour, to adopt her views of the objectionable character of Alexander's projects. France and Russia wished to hurry matters to an immediate crisis: and at the very first meeting of the Congress, the French minister, M. de Montmorency, laid before it a statement of the recent events in Spain, and in three categorical questions inquired what aid the rest of the allies would give to France "in case her active interference in the affairs "of Spain should become necessary;" if, in short, as it was expressed in another phrase of the same questions, "war should break out between France and Spain."

These questions of M. de Montmorency had apparently been previously concerted with the Emperor of Russia, who was himself at Verona, and who at once replied to the French questions by expressing his willingness to

* Stapleton's Canning, i., 146.

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aid France with 150,000 men. But Wellington was no less prompt in the expression of the feelings of his own Government. He declined to answer hypothetical questions;* but he set before the Congress so forcibly the dangers to which a Russian army marching through Germany, and established, as Alexander proposed, in Piedmont, would expose France, (since France could only need such assistance if she were by herself unequal to cope with Spain, or if she distrusted the fidelity of her own troops;) that M. de Montmorency came over to his opinion, and became as averse to the co-operation of Russia as he had at first been eager to obtain it. †

But the formal request made by France for support had given a manifest advantage to Russia, whose eagerness to afford it was undisguised, and whose influence over Austria and Prussia finally prevailed to induce those powers to promise France their co-operation, though it was not yet settled in what manner it was to be afforded. And the attitude assumed and maintained by Wellington rendered this a very perplexing question to them. Their object was avowed to be, by making an example of the Spanish revolutionists, to strike a salutary terror into the revolutionists of all countries. And their first proposal was that they should unite in a formal treaty offensive and defensive with France. But Wellington was neither to be overreached by subtlety of argument, nor cajoled by the insidious caresses of those who, led by the very greatness of his military renown to undervalue his political capacity, hoped to make him an instrument for their own insidious purposes;‡ and

* Capefigue, 'Histoire de la Restauration,' vii., 387.

† Stapleton's Canning, 151.

‡ "On caressait en vain le successeur de Marlborough pour le faire sortir de la politique de son pays."—Chateaubriand, 'Congrès de Verone,' i., 115.

accordingly to such a treaty he positively refused to accede, pointing out, among other arguments, the unreasonableness of imagining that any declaration of war could be made by Spain against France, which the French ministers professed to, and for a time apparently did really anticipate. And his refusal caused M. de Montmorency to abandon the idea of such a treaty; since it was far from being the policy of his Government to have any visible separation from England. Next it was suggested that each of the powers should address a separate note to Spain, insisting upon the adoption of a certain line of conduct by the Spanish authorities, and holding forth no ambiguous threats of war in the event of their refusal. But this measure was equally protested against by Wellington, who told its advocates, "that to animadvert upon the internal transactions of an independent State, unless they affected the essential interests of British subjects, was inconsistent with the principles which invariably guided his Government." He pointed out that, as a general rule, if such notes should produce any effect, they would involve the nations from which they proceeded in serious responsibilities; and if they failed to produce the effect which their framers desired, they would only make matters worse by the irritation which they would have caused; while in the particular case in question, they must in any event "produce the worst consequences upon the probable discussions between Spain and France." He further argued that such notes* were likely to defeat their object, since experience had shown that in all revolutions nothing is so intolerable to the people involved in them as the organized interference of foreign powers. That

* Chateaubriand, 'Histoire du Congrès de Verone,' i., 121.

the result of such a step was always to weaken and to endanger the party which it was intended to support; and that in Spain especially such a feeling of jealousy was universal and all-powerful. He also pointed out that some of the demands which the advocates of these notes proposed to make were inconsistent with the laws of the country to which they were to be addressed. And he declared that it was impossible for his sovereign to connect himself with such demands, or, in fact, to make any communication whatever to the Spanish Government on the subject of its relations with France. At the same time, in addition to this remonstrance against the course proposed to be taken, he took upon himself to recommend a line of conduct which he maintained to be not only preferable in policy, but also more in accordance with the usual method of proceeding among independent nations; though the Holy Alliance had departed from this system, in the assertion of some imaginary moral right of intervention. He recommended that the different courts should carefully limit themselves to what might be called "the external "cause of quarrel which had arisen between France and "Spain; should abstain from addressing any menace to "Spain; and, above all things, should forbear to ap- "proach her territory with any hostile demonstration, "contenting themselves with concluding with France a "defensive treaty."*

His remonstrances, however, failed to prevent the transmission of the notes to Paris, in order to be transmitted from that city to Madrid, though it probably induced some slight modification of their language. And after their delivery, the ministers of Austria, Russia, and Prussia formed their decisions on Spanish affairs by

* Capefigue, 'Histoire de la Restauration,' vii., 389.

themselves, and drew up a document, in which they agreed to co-operate with France in the event of Spain making any attack upon that kingdom, or of any further outrage on the person or authority of King Ferdinand being committed by the Spaniards. Wellington still endeavoured to preserve peace; and with the view of showing them the difficulties attending the line of conduct in which these allies were involving themselves, he addressed a formal inquiry to them, asking what their intentions were, if the notes which they had agreed to send should lead to war, and war to the subjugation of Spain; but he could not obtain any distinct answer; and it is probable that they had not yet resolved on their future course in such an event, but intended to be guided by circumstances, with a secret bias from the first in favour of an occupation of Spain by a French army.

He now prepared to leave Verona, since it was plain that his presence there could no longer have any effect on the conduct which the other powers had resolved to adopt with respect to Spain: but, before he departed, he presented two memorials to the assembled ministers, one of which stated that the British Government had been compelled by circumstances to acknowledge the independence of the governments formed in the Spanish colonies in America, so far as to enter into negotiations with them. And the second, referring to a subject which was at all times an object of primary interest to his own country, and one on which we have seen that he had formerly exerted himself with great energy, complained of the remissness of the French in enforcing the laws against the slave trade; which, it was asserted, was now carried on extensively by means of a fraudulent use of the French flag. He pressed his complaint with earnestness, but with small success. M. de Chateaubriand, who was now the

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French minister at the Congress (M. de Montmorency having returned to France), in a brief reply admitted the indifference of the public mind in France to the subject, which he traced chiefly to the injuries formerly inflicted on the French colonies in St. Domingo * by the blacks; and in some degree, also, to the fact of the treaties into which France had entered for the abolition of the trade being so connected with the victories of her foreign enemies as to be very unpopular on that account. He also persisted himself in misunderstanding the motives which inspired Englishmen on this question; asserting that though a few of them might perhaps be influenced by feelings of Christian charity, the adoption of their views by the leaders of the different parties was a piece of pure political selfishness.† Some discussions likewise took place in the Congress on the subject of the Greek insurrection and the disputes which were likely to arise out of it between Turkey and Russia; but it will be better to reserve the mention of them to a later period.

On the 29th of November, Wellington left Verona for Paris; convinced in his own mind that war between France and Spain was inevitable; but still eager to leave no means which might avert it unemployed. For a moment he found the appearance of affairs less warlike in France than it had seemed in Italy. Ferdinand's wish for aid against the Cortes had diminished, while the total defeat of the royalist party seemed, even in the eyes of the French ministers, to have lessened the chance of any such aid being successful. The French merchants, also, were very adverse to any rupture; and M. de Villèle himself admitted that there was now no reason to apprehend that Spain would declare war against France, and in

* Chateaubriand, 'Congrès de Verone,' i., 77.

† Marcellus, 'Politique de la Restauration,' p. 95.

consequence he began to hold language of a more peaceful tenor than before; though his Government did not discontinue those intrigues with the different factions in Spain, which had had no small share in fomenting the original insurrection. Wellington skilfully availed himself of these feelings in the breast of M. de Villèle to induce him to despatch a courier to Verona to request a delay in the presentation of the Austrian, Russian, and Prussian notes to the court of Madrid;* and then, believing, from communications which had passed between the Spanish and the British Ministry, that Spain was not disinclined to avail herself of our mediation, with a view to avert hostilities, he made a formal offer of such mediation to the French court, and two days afterwards quitted Paris, and rejoined his colleagues in London on the 20th of December.

The very same day, however, that he made this offer to M. de Villèle, Chateaubriand returned to Paris, where he received the portfolio for Foreign Affairs; and his arrival and accession to the French Ministry produced an immediate change in its views. He breathed nothing but war. He appears to have taken some offence at the uncompromising tone adopted by Wellington at Verona; who, he complained, appeared to think himself still commanding at Waterloo: but the motive which really influenced his conduct was a belief that in a war against Spain success would be certain, and that it offered a favourable opportunity to restore the honour of the French flag † on the very soil on which it had contracted some of its deepest stains. He thought that it would be easy to prevent England from taking part with Spain, by showing her that such a step on her part would involve her in a war not with France alone, but perhaps

* Chateaubriand, i., 234. † Ibid., i., 125.

with all Europe, and certainly with Russia: while he would not have been sorry himself to see these arguments fail, since even in a war with England he flattered himself that he could foresee a certain and "an easy suc- "cess, if it were conducted on a new plan." He had also an inward hope, which he probably as yet kept within his own breast, that success in this war, and the intimate alliance with Russia which he expected to be cemented by it, might enable his country to recover her frontier on the Rhine, of which the results of the wars of the Empire had deprived her.* He was aided in his views by a jealousy which Villéle himself also felt of England, and of the commercial advantages which he feared that we should monopolize, in consequence of a treaty which we had lately concluded with the Spanish Government.

The consequence was, that a week after Wellington's return to London, Villéle sent a reply to his note, declining our mediation; but Canning and Wellington would not yet desist from their virtuous endeavours to preserve peace; and they decided that Wellington should send Lord Fitzroy Somerset to Madrid, to convey from him such advice respecting the conduct of Spanish affairs at the present crisis as his position as a grandee of Spain entitled him to offer, and to which the vast services which he had rendered to that country might be expected to give a weight almost irresistible. The advice which he thus tendered may be summed up in a few words:— That there could be neither tranquillity at home for Spain, nor prosperity abroad, either as concerned her relations with foreign countries, or with her own alienated colonies, while the powers allotted to the King were not sufficient to enable him to perform his duties:

* Chateaubriand, ii., 223.

that consequently the only chance of the restoration of domestic peace (since "a King was not only necessary "for the government of their country, but was also a "part of their system, as established by themselves"*) lay in making, in concert with Ferdinand, such an alteration in the existing Constitution of Spain as should give him the power of executing his office.

It was the middle of January, 1823, before Lord Fitzroy reached Madrid. The menacing notes of the powers beyond the Rhine had already been delivered, and had, as was natural, given great offence to the Spanish pride; while the revolutionary party were also encouraged to disregard them, and to brave the enmity of France, by representations made to them by some of their partisans in England, that such extensive sympathy for their cause prevailed among the British nation that, in the event of a war, they would be sure to obtain the assistance of a British army.† These circumstances naturally deprived Wellington's advice of much of its effect, though it might perhaps not have been wholly fruitless had it not been for the imprudent language put by the French ministers into the mouth of King Louis on the occasion of his opening the Chambers on the 27th. He declared that constitutional rights could only be enjoyed by the Spaniards as a free gift from their King, and that to secure to that King (a descendant like himself of Henry IV.) the authority which might enable him to confer such a gift on his people, 100,000 Frenchmen were ready to invade Spain.

From this moment it was plain that the war party in the French ministry was so powerful that war was inevitable. Louis' speech excited the greatest indigna-

* Memorandum given to Lord F. Somerset.

† Stapleton, i., 237.

tion among all parties in England; but a difference of opinion as to the results of the war was at once seen to exist in the cabinet. Canning, mindful of Pitt's prophecies of the brief duration of the war commenced in 1794, as contrasted with the event, pronounced that France was entering upon a course of which no one could foresee the end; while Wellington, with a more accurate knowledge of Spain and its people, expressed an unhesitating opinion that if France acted with energy and promptitude she would succeed without difficulty. He could hardly himself have anticipated so complete a fulfilment of his predictions as was afforded by the result.*

The speech of the French King had roused such indignation in Spain, that though Canning instructed Sir William A'Court, our ambassador at Madrid, to urge the Spanish Government to concede some of the points demanded by France, his advice proved fruitless; and as France was openly preparing for war, the Spanish ministers on their part made preparations to remove the seat of government and the King himself to Seville, the moment that a foreign soldier crossed the frontier. Ferdinand was so completely in their hands, that though he openly proclaimed his reluctance to quit his capital, he was compelled to consent, and ultimately departed from it on the 20th of March. Three days earlier the Duc d'Angoulême had left Paris to take the command of the French force: on the 6th of April his troops crossed the Bidassoa, and once more a French invading army stood upon the soil of Spain. In a proclamation which that Prince issued on entering the country, he declared his object to be "to assist

* Marcellus, p. 33.

"the friends of order in setting free their captive King, "and rescuing the nation from the dominion of the "ambitious few who at present constituted its govern- "ment."* The northern provinces had been throughout the stronghold of the royalists, and in them he was received, not only without resistance, but almost with welcome; and he carefully avoided turning the friendly disposition of the natives into hostility by any acts of military outrage or oppression, but as he marched preserved the strictest discipline and order, paying for all the supplies required for his soldiers, and doing his utmost to efface by his present conduct the recollection of the cruelties practised by the last French soldiers who had been seen in the land. The Spanish generals who were charged with the defence of Madrid, evacuated it at his approach, and though the Cortes had published a declaration of war against France as soon as they heard of the invasion of their frontier, they had scarcely a single regiment prepared to give effect to their declaration. With the exception of a momentary but ineffectual stand made at Vera Cruz by one battalion of 1,500 men the French met with no resistance till they reached Seville, when Ferdinand, though more unwilling than ever to take a step which in reality he looked upon as fleeing from his friends to his enemies, was compelled to retreat to Cadiz. So openly, however, did he avow his repugnance to this last step, that to Cadiz the British ambassador did not accompany him, because he could no longer be looked upon as a free agent; and the French prince, adopting the same idea that Ferdinand was now a prisoner in the hands of his disloyal subjects, convoked the Supreme Councils of Castile and the Indies at

* Stapleton, i., 392.

Madrid, and commanded them to appoint a Regency. The Regency, however, behaved with as senseless precipitation as had ever been displayed by the revolutionary party; and at the same time the Cortes also behaved with increased violence the more it appeared that their reign was approaching its termination, for so little care had been taken to provision Cadiz that it was plain that its defence could not long be maintained. As a last resource they entreated the mediation of the British ambassador, who had retired to Gibraltar when there was no longer any authority in Spain to which he could consider himself accredited, but who at once returned and opened a communication with the French prince; but the Duke insisted upon Ferdinand being restored to liberty, and bombarded the town with an effect that showed the Cortes that resistance was impossible. Their only hope was to make good terms for themselves; and with this view, having extorted an amnesty from the King, they set him at liberty, and on the 1st of October he repaired to the French camp, and at once showed how unworthy he was that France or any other nation should have interested herself in his cause, by annulling the amnesty, on the ground that it had been granted under compulsion, and by treating all the leaders of the constitutionalists with universal and unexpected severity. The Duc d'Angoulême, having remonstrated in vain against these measures, refused to be present at Ferdinand's triumphal return to Madrid, and returned to Paris, leaving the bulk of his army in Spain as garrisons to some of the principal fortresses, in order to be able to suppress any fresh outbreak, for which Ferdinand seemed likely to afford abundant provocation.

But if the French prince was but little satisfied with his success, the English people were still less so. The

liberal party in England, without much reason, had felt a very general sympathy for the partisans of the constitution, and, now that they were apparently laid at the mercy of their sovereign, it attacked the ministry in both Houses of Parliament for not having prevented the French invasion of Spain; and long before the issue of that campaign was known, Lord Grey and Lord Ellenborough made Wellington himself the especial object of their reproaches, and accused him of having, in open disregard of his instructions, connived at the French invasion of Spain; of having held language unworthy of the country which he represented; and of having been duped into acquiescence in the treatment of an ancient ally which was not more injurious to her than it was discreditable to ourselves.

Against these grave charges Lord Aberdeen defended him with great zeal and force; but Wellington's best defence came from his own lips. By papers already before the House, he showed that he had most fully carried out his instructions, which had charged him to preserve a strict neutrality, to protest against war, and, if that protest should prove ineffectual, to avoid entangling us in it as the allies of either side. Retorting the arguments of his assailants on themselves, he pointed out that, though his course had been unmistakable, it was not even now clear from their language whether they wished for peace or for war. He recapitulated every particular of his conduct during the negotiations at Verona, and, in reply to the charge that he had been the dupe of the French artifice, he showed clearly from the papers before the House that he had from the first foreseen the probability of the French resorting to hostilities; though, much as he deprecated them, he had not considered it becoming in himself to endeavour to avert them by menaces. His

great object and his own most fervent wish had been to preserve peace; and looking upon himself almost as a mediator between angry parties, he contended that it had been his duty to avoid the use of any language which could have been looked upon as menacing or insulting; more especially when the Government, of which he was the mouthpiece, was not inclined to support such language by force. His task had been one of peculiar difficulty, because the principles of non-intervention, which he had been directed to assert, and which had been previously laid down in Lord Castlereagh's note, had never been admitted by any of the other powers assembled at the Congress. He complained, and irresistibly proved, that his own language at Verona had been perverted and misrepresented by those who now attacked him; and he argued with great fairness, not only that he had been justified in approving of the conduct of France, in establishing an army of observation in the Pyrenees while a civil war was raging so close to her borders that "there was not a town or a "village on the French frontier which was not liable to "insult and injury;" but that those who blamed him for the expression of such approval were guilty of the greatest inconsistency, since they themselves advocated an increase of our own armaments in consequence of the French invasion of Spain.

His exculpation was complete in the eyes of his countrymen, and it equally won for him the esteem of foreigners. M. de Marcellus, who at that time was discharging the chief duties of the French embassy in England, has recorded his admiration * of the candour and also of the unswerving self-command with which,

* 'Politique de la Restauration,' 221.

while harassed by these undeserved attacks from many quarters at home, and while thinking many of the leaders of opinion in France very unreasonable, he refrained from uttering in public a single expression painful to any of the allies, and especially to France, where every word that dropped from him was naturally an object of great attention; and has also extolled the acute foresight with which both to French and Spaniards he predicted the result of the struggle and the causes which would lead to it. Had his counsels been listened to by either, France would have been saved from the discredit of an interference which, though lacquered over by success, was nevertheless in principle unjustifiable; and Spain would have been spared the humiliation of being driven to loyalty to its lawful sovereign by foreign bayonets; for, as he kept up a constant correspondence at this time with Alava and others of his acquaintance in Spain, he never failed to impress on them the hopelessness of resistance to the French army, and the consequent necessity of acting with moderation and of yielding to reason, "especially when" (as he said to Marcellus) "she was the strongest."

Yet even while blaming France for her interference, he considered her success, since she had interfered, desirable for both countries; for France (and in this even the most violent Whigs agreed with him *), as greatly strengthening the government, which very much needed additional strength; and for Spain, as giving the death-blow to a constitution, his opinion of the impracticable nature of which had never varied since its original promulgation. But he greatly deplored the language

* Lord Grey said to M. Marcellus in May, "La France joue gros jeu; mais si elle réussit, le pouvoir des Bourbons reposera sur une base plus solide que jamais."—Marcellus, p. 248.

which had been held on the subject by men of both parties in our Parliament, declaring that it had placed us in a false position, which was tending to isolate us from the rest of Europe, so that what was done was done without us or in spite of us, and to make us, as he said (following for once the fashion of classical quotations*),

"Penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos."

* 'C'est un mode qui prend.'—Marcellus, 303.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Wellington is sent as Ambassador to St. Petersburg—The State of Greece—Its revolt from Turkey—Cruelties of Ibrahim Pacha—Wellington succeeds in his Mission.

WELLINGTON'S opinion of the diplomatic intercourse between nations was that the day had gone by when success could be looked for from tortuous manœuvres and underhand subterfuges and evasions, and that straightforward frankness, which was in no degree incompatible with conciliatory courtesy, nor with prudent reserve, was the line of conduct which in the end was the best calculated to gain its objects. It was on this principle that he had acted at Verona, and his colleagues were so well satisfied with the manner in which he had conducted the negotiations there, that at the beginning of 1826 they selected him to go as ambassador extraordinary to St. Petersburg, to endeavour to avert a war which Russia was greatly inclined to commence against Turkey. The state of affairs between those two empires had come under discussion at Verona, but nothing had then been decided; and meanwhile events had been gradually taking a course which rendered their

* Rush's 'Residence at the Court of St. James'.' 2nd Ser., vol. i., 325.

peaceful solution (peaceful at least as far as those powers were concerned) daily more and more uncertain.

In 1821 the Greeks had just broken out into open revolt against Turkey. There was no question but that their rebellion had been secretly fomented by Russia, which indeed had several justifiable grounds of complaint against the Sultan, who, by his oppression of his Christian subjects, had violated many articles of the treaties between himself and the other potentates of Europe, and especially those conditions in which the Russian emperor had a peculiar interest. Lord Castlereagh, however, had given such energetic advice to the Porte on the subject that that court, for almost the first time, hearkened to lessons of moderation, complied with the demands of Russia, as far as they were warranted by the spirit of former treaties, and even made reparation for some of her acts which had been done in contravention of those treaties. Russia, however, although she had no longer any tangible ground of complaint, wished to make her superiority not only felt by Turkey, but also evident to the rest of the world, and with this view proposed to make further demands on the Porte, bearing on its future government of its Christian subjects, in which she desired the co-operation of England. To this proposal, if the demands were to be backed up by menaces of war in case of refusal, the Duke, while at Verona, had been instructed to refuse his consent. The foreign minister of the Sultan, the Reis Effendi, had declared that his master would never tolerate foreign interference in his domestic concerns, nor was it possible for us, consistently with the doctrine which we were enforcing with regard to Spain, to find fault with such a declaration. Lord Strangford, the British ambassador at Constantinople, had attended the Congress during its sittings at Vienna, and, before the

arrival of Wellington had faithfully expressed the views of the British Cabinet, but had given umbrage to Alexander by not sufficiently defending the Russian government against the charge which the Turks brought against it, of having been the chief instigator of the Greek revolt. In fact, Lord Strangford had been convinced that the accusation was well founded, but its truth did not make it more palatable to the Russian emperor, and the first task which had awaited Wellington at Verona was that of defending Lord Strangford and removing from the Emperor's mind the offence which he had taken at that minister.

In this he completely succeeded; partly by prevailing upon Canning to allow Lord Strangford (who was placed in some degree under his orders) to make friendly representations to the Divan, as the Turkish Cabinet is called, to induce it to comply with, and in some respects even to anticipate the wishes of the sovereigns of Christian Europe concerning the navigation of the Black Sea, and the government of the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia. And he succeeded also in inducing the Emperor to abstain from any interference on behalf of the Greeks, in which he was assisted partly by an idea entertained by Alexander that their revolt was connected with the same spirit of revolution * which had caused the troubles of Western Europe, and partly by another opinion which he had embraced, that matters in Greece were proceeding to a point at which Great Britain would see that foreign intervention was indispensable, and would of her own accord become desirous of Russian co-operation in such an intervention.

For some time, therefore, the Russian emperor was contented to let matters in Greece take their own course

* Chateaubriand, 'Congrès de Verone,' i., 221.

without attempting to influence them by any open interference. There did indeed exist at first a good deal of mutual dissatisfaction between Russia and Turkey, the Russians complaining that the Turks had not yet fulfilled the stipulations into which they had entered with respect to the Principalities, and the Turks on their part accusing the Russians of disregarding some of the provisions of the Treaty of Bucharest; there was also in the Emperor's councils a party desirous of war with Turkey on any pretence, in the hope of thus acquiring for Russia the mastery of the Bosphorus, and with that a free entrance into the Mediterranean. But our ambassadors at St. Petersburgh and Constantinople, acting under the guidance of Canning's energetic wisdom, exerted themselves with such effect to pacify the jealousies of both countries that by the end of 1824 they were brought to a more conciliatory temper, and the grievances on either side were almost wholly removed.

In the mean time the insurrection raged with unabated violence in Greece, though the Greeks were even more separated by intestine divisions than the Spaniards, jealousy and rivalry sowing distrust among the different leaders, and Senate, Executive Council, and Provisional Government alike interfering with, embarrassing, and counteracting each other. Nevertheless, in most encounters they obtained decided advantages over their masters, and appeared to be making visible progress towards the attainment of their coveted independence. Both sides behaved with most detestable cruelty, which was not diminished when, in 1824, Mehemet Ali sent a strong force from Egypt, to aid the Sultan's troops, under Ibrahim Pacha, his son-in-law, who, though now meeting with but a chequered success, at a

later period, by his conquest of Syria, fixed on the brows of the aged Viceroy a crown independent in all but name, as permanent, as substantial, and almost as important as that which many ages had honoured on the successor of the conqueror of Constantinople.

The atrocities committed by both Greeks and Turks, which amounted to a complete system of merciless extermination by way of reprisal, excited the indignation of Europe, and awakened in the British Cabinet a strong feeling that even some violation of the usual rule of non-interference would be justifiable in order to put an end to proceedings which were a positive disgrace to human nature. We had some claim to be listened to by the Greeks, because we had set the example of recognizing them as a belligerent nation, instead of looking on them as rebels; though in so doing we had offended the Turks without satisfying the Greeks, since these latter, instead of a neutral recognition, claimed from us protection and support as Christians warring against infidels, while the former conceived that they had a right to our cordial assistance as sovereigns engaged in an unprovoked contest with rebels. And Nesselrode, the Russian prime minister, was far from being averse to offer his advice to the Turks on the same subject, and had devised an elaborate plan for the pacification of Greece, which would have preserved to the Porte a nominal sovereignty and a permanent and not inconsiderable tribute, at the same time that it practically secured to Greece many of the chief advantages of independence.

The British Government did not disapprove of the principle of this plan; but it was not, perhaps, very strange that both the nations to be affected by it vehemently protested against it, and while they both

continued in this disposition, Canning thought himself bound to maintain a strict neutrality between them, not considering it right or prudent to employ force to compel the consent of either, while Russia, though preferring to succeed by fair means, was not at all unwilling to have recourse to coercion. During the discussions that necessarily arose from this new complication of affairs, the war continued in Greece; Ibrahim indeed received large reinforcements from Egypt, and obtained a firm footing in the south-western districts of the Morea, but the Greeks on their side gained advantages nearly sufficient to counterbalance his progress; repulsed him in his attempt on Napoli, and in one or two other enterprises; and, though on the whole he was the gainer by the campaign of 1825, were so much encouraged by the general result of the war that they proposed to elect a king; and the Provisional Government hoped to coax us into a more active patronage of their efforts by passing an Act to place the whole nation under our protection. Such a protectorate we of course declined, and Canning reminded the Greek deputies, who asked his advice as to the sovereign whom they should elect to rule over their country, that Great Britain was bound to Turkey by many treaties of old standing, which rendered it impossible for us to adopt hostile measures against her in support of the pretensions of the Greeks. It was as much as Greece could expect if we were willing to use our friendly offices with Turkey to induce that power to terminate the contest on terms not inconsistent with the dignity and future practical independence of a country of which she had hitherto enjoyed the sovereign possession. To carry out the views thus expressed, Lord Strangford was despatched on a special mission to St. Petersburgh, and Mr. Stratford Canning was appointed ambassador to

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Constantinople, being charged to direct his first efforts to the object of regaining our influence at that court, which recent events had somewhat diminished, and of bringing the Divan to such a temper as should dispose it to listen favourably to those propositions of Russia which were calculated to contribute to the restoration and maintenance of peace. Unhappily, Lord Strangford, finding Nesselrode offended with the courts of Austria and France, and consequently the more disposed to come to a close understanding with us on the Turkish question, was encouraged to propose to the Russian ministers a plan for intervention which Canning found it necessary publicly to disavow. It had not, however, been submitted to the Emperor, for in the winter of 1825 that prince, while travelling for the health of the Empress in the southern districts of his dominions, was attacked by a fever which terminated his life on the 1st of December. His death made no difference in the policy of his court, since his youngest brother, Nicholas, who succeeded him, adopted all his views with a more sagacious intellect and a more unyielding resolution to conduct them to their accomplishment.

At the same time, however, that Canning disavowed Lord Strangford's overtures to Nesselrode, he charged him to assure the Russian minister that our Government was still disposed to come to a separate understanding with Russia on the subject; and (since the accession of the new Emperor, and the very peculiar circumstances with which it was accompanied, appeared to furnish a reasonable pretext for such a measure) Wellington was sent on a special mission to St. Petersburgh, ostensibly to congratulate Nicholas on his accession to his new dignity, but with an additional commission to ascertain his views with respect to Turkey and Greece, and to

endeavour to come to some confidential understanding with him on that subject.*

The Duke's task was delicate and difficult. Many circumstances rendered the new Emperor more disposed to war than his predecessor had been. He had not been the natural heir to the throne which he had just ascended, but it had become his in consequence of the conduct of his elder brother, Constantine, whom private family arrangements had induced some years before to make a formal renunciation of his right of succession, with the approval of the late emperor; and the accession of Nicholas had given occasion for the outbreak of a conspiracy and mutiny, which had long been in preparation, and which were not quelled without great danger and a pitched battle in the streets of St. Petersburgh. There was reason to fear that discontent was widely spread through the whole army, and Nesselrode scarcely concealed the fact that apprehensions of the existence of this feeling made it seem desirable to find employment for the soldiers against a foreign enemy. At the same time it was probable that if Russia should drive matters to a war, it would take a different direction now from that which it would have received from Alexander. That emperor, who especially prided himself on the formation of the Holy Alliance, was anxious, if he had recourse to arms at all, to take them up as its minister, and was perplexed in his desire to protect the Greeks as Christians, and to depress the Turks as neighbours whose possessions he coveted, by the feeling that the first, though fellow-members of the church of which he was the chief pillar, were yet rebels against their sovereign; that the latter, though lords of Constantinople and of

* Stapleton, ii., 464.

the Black Sea, were nevertheless only vindicating their lawful rights against revolted subjects; and that the same principle which had led him to approve of the French interference to re-establish Ferdinand's power in Spain, forbade him to give support to those who sought to shake the Sultan's authority in the Morea. But if the Holy Alliance had not altogether expired with his death, adherence to its principles was at all events no object of solicitude to Nicholas, whose views were directed solely to the aggrandizement of his own empire, and, as the direct road to that aggrandizement, to the dismemberment of Turkey.

While, therefore, it was apparent that he was inclined to war, it was equally evident that Turkey was likely to be the object of his hostilities; and to avert such an event, which in its ultimate consequences was likely to imperil the peace of all Europe, was the task committed to Wellington, who was instructed on the part of Great Britain to offer to mediate between the Emperor and the Sultan, and also between the Sultan and the revolted Greeks, while this second offer was made to the Divan at the same time by Mr. Stratford Canning. If the Emperor himself should prove desirous of joining us in our mediation between the Porte and its Christian subjects, we were not inclined to object to his doing so. But a still more important step towards disposing the Sultan to listen to counsels of peace, in the opinion of our Cabinet, would be to show that Potentate that in our eyes the dictates of even the most imperious policy were to be postponed to those of humanity, which forbade us any longer to tolerate the barbarities which Ibrahim was committing in Greece, and still more the unheard-of atrocity which he was meditating as soon as it should be in his power to execute it; being no less than a design

to carry off the whole nation of the Greeks to Egypt as slaves, and to repeople their country with a colony of Mahomedans.

The treatment which Wellington received at St. Petersburgh showed that a more judicious choice of an ambassador could not have been made. The Emperor received him with the most marked honour, and on the 31st of March, the anniversary of the capture of Paris, in 1814, issued an imperial decree, ordering that the Smolensko regiment, which had been under his command in the army of occupation, and which had been originally raised by Peter the Great, and bore a very high reputation in the Russian army, should from that time forth bear the name of the Duke of Wellington's regiment. And the harmonious manner in which the discussions were brought to a conclusion, which involved some abandonment of the secret wishes of Nicholas, was probably not a little owing to the ascendency which the Duke's unrivalled renown and individual weight of character gave him over the Russian counsellors. Some delay was caused by personal feelings on the part of the Emperor, whom the discovery that the mutiny which had taken place at his accession had been the development of a far more extensive conspiracy than he had at first suspected, rendered less disposed than formerly to do any act which might seem to favour the Greeks; but at last, after many discussions, the British and Russian Cabinets came to a perfect understanding, and, at the beginning of April, Wellington and Nesselrode signed a protocol, by which they agreed to propose to Turkey a plan for the pacification of Greece on principles not far removed from that which the Russian minister had formerly suggested. And then the Duke returned to England, having once more shown himself a most skilful

diplomatist, and a most faithful and able expositor of the policy of his Government.

His visit to Russia gave him a nearer insight than he had possessed before into her military strength, which was becoming an object of peculiar solicitude in England on account of her aggressive conduct towards Persia, which was looked upon by many of our statesmen to be only a precursor of attempts to weaken our own dominion in India. On his journey he had occupied himself with a careful examination of Segur's account of Napoleon's invasion in 1812, drawing up a quantity of notes on the campaign, which he subsequently gave to Sir Walter Scott, to assist him in his memoirs of Napoleon. And the opinion which these studies and his own personal inspection of the country led him to form was, that however invincible Russia might prove while on the defensive, no power, except perhaps Turkey, had any great reason to dread the result of her aggressive enmity. That the Russian emperor was exceedingly jealous of us, and more so in Asia than even in Europe, he clearly perceived; but he pronounced that, "notwithstanding "the million of men whom he had in arms, or he might "even say in consequence of that million in arms, he "was not better prepared for war than his neighbours, "while he had more reason than others to dread its "consequences." He declared that what he had witnessed in their country had increased his respect for the nation, but had strengthened the opinion that, while it was itself "invulnerable from all continental attack," it would be long before any offensive war which it could wage, except against the Sultan, would be formidable; and he expressed his belief that the Emperor himself was convinced that he would do better for some time to abstain from any enterprise even against that

prince.* How accurately he judged both of the inability of Russia to succeed in projects of aggression when opposed by the powers of western Europe, and of theirs to inflict any vital wound upon her, the events which took place the year after his death gave most convincing proof.

* 'Life of Malcolm,' ii., 451.

CHAPTER XL.

Wellington approves of sending a British force to Portugal—He becomes Commander-in-Chief—He resigns on Canning's becoming Prime Minister—Explanations from him and from Canning—Canning dies and is succeeded by Lord Goderich—The battle of Navarino.

A YEAR or two earlier, great sympathy for the Greeks had been shown by the Liberal party in England, many of whom had sent them supplies of arms and money, while some, still more enthusiastic, had repaired to their classic land to lavish their personal exertions in the support of a cause which they identified at once with liberty and Christianity. And the most illustrious of these enthusiasts, Lord Byron, whose muse had devoted many of her happiest efforts to celebrate the beauties and excellences of the country and of its inhabitants, had perished at Missolonghi of a fever which he had caught amid the pestilential marshes which surround that town. But the interest in the Greek question seemed for a while to have died out in England, and so little attention did it excite at this moment that not the slightest discussion on the subject was raised in either House of Parliament by Wellington's mission to Russia. And the only event which during the year 1826 made it necessary for him to take any share in the debates was the invasion of Portugal by Spain, and the consequent

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despatch of a British force to aid our ancient ally in its distress, which was decided on with almost unparalleled promptitude by the Cabinet, was justified by our great Foreign Secretary,

"Our last, our best, our only orator," *

in strains of eloquence such as had not been heard within the walls of St. Stephen's since they had echoed the contests of Pitt and Fox, or at least since Grattan's indignant oratory had beaten down the declamation of those who bade their countrymen bow to the fortune of Napoleon, and distrust the genius of Wellington: such as have never been heard within them since a premature grave closed over the mortal remains of their utterer: and which was ratified in one burst of almost unanimous rapture by his hearers, transported as they were by the burning words and majestic attitude of the impassioned yet prudent and far-sighted minister. Canning † had consulted Wellington in every part of the affair; and being desirous to show the unanimity of the Cabinet on the subject, and no doubt also feeling that the Duke's personal experience in the Peninsula would give a peculiar weight to his advocacy of the measure, he had made a special request to him that he would defend the measure in the House of Lords. Accordingly the Duke in a forcible though (as was then usual with him) a very brief speech, expressed his concurrence in the view which Canning had taken of the importance of the crisis, his conviction of the indispensable necessity of the measures which had been adopted to meet it, and his confident hope that those measures would be found sufficient to secure the safety of our ancient ally, and to restore peace between the two kingdoms of the Peninsula.

* Byron. 'Age of Bronze.'

† Stapleton's 'Life and Times of G. Canning,' 545–7.

The time, however, was approaching when he was to take a more active part in domestic politics. In January, 1827, the Duke of York died, to the very general regret of the nation, and to the universal sorrow of the army, which lamented in him not only a kind and affable friend, a candid and impartial governor, but also a sagacious and energetic abolisher of abuses; and which felt that no small portion of the renown which it had won in its recent wars was owing to the judicious and practical reforms which he had introduced into every branch of the service. Nor was his loss the only one which the country had to sustain; it is believed, indeed, to have been the direct cause of others; for his funeral at Windsor took place on a night of deep snow and severe frost; and the piercing cold of St. George's Chapel was thought to have laid the seeds of fatal illness in the constitutions of more than one of those whose position required them to take part in the ceremony.

There could be no question as to who should succeed the Duke as Commander-in-Chief: and as soon as the grave closed over his remains, the office was conferred upon Wellington, who also, by the particular desire of his sovereign, succeeded him in the command of the regiment of which the deceased Prince had long been colonel, the Grenadier Guards. In the General Order which he issued on assuming the command of the army, Wellington did ample justice to the high qualities of his predecessor, and to the unceasing energy with which he had watched over the real interests of the army, and had in every way promoted its efficiency and reputation; an energy which had scarcely ever been more conspicuously displayed than in the very last month of his life, when he had sent off the expedition to Portugal in less than

one week after he received orders from the Government to prepare for its despatch.* And then he began to apply himself with zeal and industry to follow his example. His new office was, as he truly said a short time afterwards, of all others the most congenial to his feelings; and it is not unworthy of remark, as showing how false was the accusation that he was indifferent to the interests of the soldiers, that the circumstance which made it so especially delightful in his eyes was the power which it gave him of "recommending his old friends and "companions to his Majesty for the professional rewards "of their services, after having passed his life in exciting "and directing their exertions."† He did not, however, hold it long. In the middle of February, Lord Liverpool was seized with an attack of paralysis, which rendered him incapable of any future performance of ministerial duties; and which for a time so wholly disabled him as to deprive him even of the faculties necessary to make a formal resignation of his office.

That which chiefly engrossed men's minds during the interval which thus elapsed between Lord Liverpool's seizure and his formal resignation, was the question whom the King would select to succeed him as Prime Minister. And this, at all times a matter of the deepest importance, was at the present crisis rendered one of unusual embarrassment by the state of parties on the subject of the removal of the disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics, or, to employ the expression in common use, the Catholic question. The King himself was almost as averse to the removal of these disabilities, Catholic Emancipation, as such a measure was somewhat absurdly though ingeniously called by its advocates, as his father had

* See Stapleton's 'Life and Times of G. Canning,' p. 577.

† See his Speech, May 2, 1827.

been. But it had been an open question in Lord Liverpool's Cabinet: that minister, with the majority of those members of his administration who were in the House of Lords, being unfavourable to the relief demanded, while those of his colleagues who were in the House of Commons, with the exception of Peel, were unanimous in their maintenance of the opposite opinion.* Lord Liverpool's talents, which were very considerable, his amiable disposition, his conciliatory tact and invariable candour towards his colleagues, had admirably fitted him to keep together an administration divided on so important a subject; and, though he was personally very unacceptable to the King, there could be but little doubt that his Government was safe, both internally and externally, as long as he should remain at its head.

To supply his place with a successor under whom both parties in the Cabinet would continue to work in harmony was the problem that George IV. was now anxious to solve. In many points of view, and certainly in the opinion of the public generally, Canning had the best claim to the vacant office: but Canning was a strenuous advocate, was indeed the chief champion of Catholic Emancipation; and it was evident that that cause would gain an almost irresistible advantage by being brought forward under the patronage of the Prime Minister. So clear, indeed, was this, that nearly six years before, when the King's dislike to Lord Liverpool had nearly produced his retirement, and when it seemed likely that, should such be the case, Lord Londonderry would receive the offer of his post, it was found that, deservedly popular as that nobleman was with his brother peers, still many very influential friends of the

* See Peel's Letter to Lord Eldon, April 9, 1827.—Twiss's 'Life of Eldon,' ii., 589.

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Government in the Upper House would have refused him their support as Prime Minister on account of his votes in favour of the Roman Catholics.* And even then, so difficult did it seem to find any one whom both parties would be willing to accept as their leader, that many expected the offer of the chief authority to be made to the Duke of Wellington, though those who knew him best doubted his inclination to listen to such a proposal. It was not probable that Canning would find more favour with the peers than Lord Londonderry, and certain that he would find infinitely less with the King, who, as has been already mentioned, had re-admitted him into the Cabinet with undisguised reluctance; and who, since he had given him the seals of the Foreign Office, had greatly disapproved of many parts of his policy, especially of his recognition of the independence of the South American colonies of Spain, and had also taken such repeated personal offence at him that he had often been on the very point of depriving him of them; indeed, Canning's continuance in his office had been owing solely to the persevering interposition of Wellington, who, as he told one of his friends,† "had "reconciled the King to him forty times."

It was probably from seeing that, if that portion of the Ministry favourable to the claims of the Roman Catholics should continue in office, it would be difficult to avoid placing Canning at the head of the Treasury, that his Majesty had first conceived the idea of forming

* See Lord Eldon's letter to Lord Stowell, without date, but written in the autumn of 1821.—Twiss's 'Life of Eldon,' ii., 435.

† The late Lord Colchester, to whose valuable Diary, portions of which have been most kindly communicated to me by the present Lord Colchester, I am indebted for many of the particulars of the account given in the following pages of the Duke's secession from Canning's ministry; and of other events of this period.

a cabinet exclusively anti-Catholic, and of placing Peel at its head; but that statesman was far too clear sighted to think such an attempt practicable, and declined the task proposed to him. And then the King, greatly perplexed, consulted the Duke, mentioning a plan which had occurred to himself (being, indeed, something like that which he had adopted when he made Lord Liverpool himself Prime Minister), of desiring the remaining members of the administration themselves to select a chief under whom they would be still willing to continue in his service. Wellington, in spite of his often expressed opinion of Canning's great talents, had no great liking for him. His acquaintance with him had been limited to official intercourse, never warming into personal intimacy; he considered that Canning, ever since his introduction into the Ministry, had been jealous* of him, and desirous to get rid of him; and he

* There was, probably, some foundation for this notion; since as early as the spring of 1823 we find Canning complaining to M. de Marcellus, that there seemed to be "no favour in the three kingdoms for any one but an illustrious "warrior;" but expressing at the same time a confidence that "his own turn "would come;" disparaging the Duke both to the French envoy and to his own colleagues, as one who placed his sole trust in a powerful artillery and "a straight, long sword;" who "thought himself always on the field of battle, "and who had no capacity for the arts and talents and tactics of peace." And a little later in the same year we find M. de Marcellus writing to Paris, as if there were notorious divisions in the British Cabinet, that the Duke, "a war-"rior of no very formidable powers in the field of intrigue, had been overborne "by the address and abilities of Canning."—'Politique de la Restauration,' 30, 33, 359.

But it is also remarkable that Canning entertained precisely the same belief of the Duke's feelings towards himself; accusing him too of fretfulness and jealousy, and at one time even going the length of suspecting him of caballing with Lord Eldon to procure changes in the Cabinet, with a view to diminish his influence, if not to procure his dismissal. He had also, in 1824, been considerably annoyed at being compelled to give up a project which he had formed of visiting Paris, because of an objection advanced by the Duke which, however, even Canning himself did not deny to have some foundation, that, in the peculiar state of politics then existing, foreign nations would

attributed the neglect with which he had been lately treated by his colleagues in some very remarkable instances* to the influence which a friendship of long standing had given Canning over the mind of Lord Liverpool. But, nevertheless, acting on his invariable rule of excluding private feelings from public affairs, he at once told the King that he had no choice except to take either Canning or Peel; and that the plan of allowing the ministers to choose their own leaders was most derogatory to his Majesty's own position, and as such, was not to be thought of for a minute. He represented to him that he could not think it becoming in himself even to offer to his Majesty any advice on such a subject; for that the choice of the Prime Minister was an act which ought to be entirely his Majesty's own. That, in fact it was, under the British Constitution, the only personal act of government which the King of Great Britain had to perform. That, when he had appointed his Prime Minister, all the other arrangements devolved upon the person so appointed, who had, by accepting the post, become responsible for his Majesty's deeds; but that to delegate his appointment to any one but himself was a surrender of his royal prerogative.

As it was his opinion, in which the King not unnaturally agreed with him, that while the Catholic

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hardly believe that there was not some political object aimed at by the visit of our Foreign Secretary to the French court.—Stapleton's 'Life and Times of Canning,' *passim*.

* This neglect had been so marked that when, in the preceding year, several new peers were created, the Duke, though a cabinet minister, was never consulted, and did not even receive the slightest communication on the subject from Lord Liverpool, nor from any of his colleagues; the first knowledge which he had of such a step being in contemplation being derived from a casual dinner conversation at a friend's house, at which he was present.

question must inevitably be left an open one in the Administration about to be formed, yet it was important that the head of the Ministry should entertain the same views on that subject which were held by his Majesty, he no doubt wished and expected that his choice should fall on Peel: but besides the ministerial seniority of Canning, and the vast superiority of his talents, private influences, which were not disregarded by the King, operated to obtain for him the preference; and when his Majesty came up to town from Windsor a few days before Easter, it was with the intention of entrusting that statesman with the chief power. Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 10th of April, Canning wrote to the Duke to inform him that he had been charged with the task of reconstructing the Administration; expressing his wish to adhere to the principles of Lord Liverpool's Government, and his feeling that his success in his task must essentially depend upon the Duke's continuing a member of the Cabinet. The Duke in his reply avowed his desire to continue to serve his Majesty with the same colleagues, but desired, before giving a positive answer to the proposal made to him by Canning, to know whom he intended to suggest to the King as the head of the Government. The next afternoon he received a second letter from Canning, to the effect that he had believed it to be so generally understood that the individual to whom the formation of the Government was entrusted was himself to be at its head, that it had not occurred to him to be necessary to state formally that he was himself to be Prime Minister, which, however, was the case. And he added, that he had delayed making this second communication till he had been able to submit it, as well as the Duke's letter of inquiry, to his Majesty. The Duke at once replied, that he had believed that Canning had a different

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arrangement in contemplation; indeed, that he had understood so from his own mouth: that he found himself unable to come to the conclusion that an Administration with Canning at its head could be conducted practically on the same principle as that presided over by Lord Liverpool, or that the country would look upon it in the same light: and therefore, thinking "that he could do "no good in the Cabinet, and that at last he should be "obliged to separate himself from it at a time when such "separation would be more inconvenient to the King's "service than it could be at the existing moment," he excused himself from forming a part of the new Government, and resigned his post as Master of the Ordnance.

Lord Eldon, Mr. Peel, and one or two other less important members of the former Administration, came to the same conclusion, and resigned their offices: but the Duke did more, and also relinquished his situation as Commander-in-Chief, which had not been usually considered in the light of a political appointment. As was natural, he took the earliest opportunity of giving a public explanation in Parliament of the grounds on which he had acted. He considered, he said, that Canning's first letter, which he affirmed to have been couched in far briefer terms than those which were addressed to other members of Lord Liverpool's Government, and which gave no information as to who were intended to be included in the new Cabinet, showed that the writer had no very sincere wish for his co-operation; and that his second letter contained a rebuke, rendered the more marked by having been previously communicated to the King, which made it impossible for him to act for the future with the new Prime Minister with that feeling of cordial confidence which his continuance in either of his offices

would have required. And he justified himself for the inquiry which he had addressed to Canning in his answer to his first letter, as to who was to be head of the new Government, by a statement that a short time previously Canning had himself informed him that in the event of the reconstruction of the Administration being entrusted to him, he had it in contemplation to retain the office of Foreign Secretary himself, and to propose to the King to raise Mr. Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to the Peerage, and to place him at the Treasury as the ostensible head of the Government. And the Duke adduced more than one precedent derived from the composition of former Administrations, which warranted him in thinking such a course not improbable: while, in his opinion, it was decidedly desirable, because, after the ability and activity with which Canning himself had advocated the claims of the Roman Catholics, it would be absolutely impossible for him, if he should be placed at the head of the Government, to act as impartially as Lord Liverpool had acted on that question. Since, therefore, the Duke considered that the inevitable result of Canning's becoming Prime Minister must be to bring the Government to the adoption of a measure which he thought, and which his Majesty was supposed to think one of peril, he contended that he "had no resource but to withdraw."

He alluded further to two reports respecting himself which had been circulated, strangely inconsistent, as he remarked, with each other; one being that he had refused to be Prime Minister, with respect to which he simply asserted that the post had not been offered to him; the other, that his withdrawal from the Cabinet had been caused by his discontent at his Majesty's refusal to make him Prime Minister. In reply to this

second accusation, he affirmed that it had never entered the head of any one to consider him qualified for such an appointment; that it was one for which he was so eminently and notoriously unfit that he himself "should "have been worse than mad if he had thought of such a "thing." (A vehemence of denial which not unnaturally provoked some sarcastic comment when, within three quarters of a year, he did accept the very post for which he now pronounced himself so incompetent.) And he added, with a sincerity which no one can doubt, that the office of Commander-in-Chief, to which he said with an honest pride he had raised himself, was one far more grateful to his feelings than one "to the duties of which " he was unaccustomed, in which he was not wished, and " for which he was not qualified."* He affirmed that he had concerted his resignation with no one; that no one whatever was aware of his intention to resign till he had done so; and he also argued, that the whole course of Canning's proceedings showed that he did not wish him to remain at the Horse Guards unless he also continued in the Cabinet. He admitted that, while resigning his Cabinet office of Master of the Ordnance, he might still have retained that of Commander-in-Chief; and that "he saw no reason why political differences of " opinion should have prevented him from commanding " the army at the Horse Guards more than an army in " the field, if circumstances had rendered it necessary to " employ his services:" "but," he reiterated his opinion, that " the tone and temper of Canning's letters, and " particularly of that one which, having been previously " submitted to his Majesty, was therefore a commu-

* The Duke, however, was mistaken in thinking that no one had wished to see him prime minister, since Peel, apparently with the concurrence of the King, had proposed him to Canning as one "whose appointment to that post "was likely to solve all difficulties."—Stapleton's Life, &c., p. 589.

"nication from the King, was of a nature to make it "impossible for him to retain the command of the "army" either. And he enforced this opinion by a reference to some of the subjects on which the Prime Minister and the Commander-in-Chief must of necessity be in the most confidential, cordial, and frequent communication with each other.

Canning, in his statement which he addressed to the House of Commons, made no particular allusion to the Duke's resignation; probably because he was unwilling to put forward anything that might seem like an attack upon him where he was not present to reply to it: but two days afterwards the Duke and he met at the dinner of the Royal Academy: and though Wellington endeavoured to avoid him, Canning sought him out, and communicated to him that he had just despatched a letter to Apsley House, in reply to some of the statements contained in the Duke's speech, and in explanation of his own conduct and motives. He admitted that he had at one moment contemplated proposing to the King to make Mr. Robinson First Lord of the Treasury, but on the understanding that he himself was to be the Prime Minister, in the same way as Lord Chatham had been while only holding the office of the Privy Seal; and added, that the King himself had suggested that, though Prime Minister, he should remain at the Foreign Office, instead of removing to the Treasury: and had quoted to him the precedent of Lord Chatham, among others, as authorizing such an arrangement. Had it been practicable, he declared that it would have been very acceptable to himself, since he greatly preferred his former to his present department, and, since he was quite indifferent to the possession of the title of Prime Minister, provided that there was no

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misapprehension anywhere as to the fact of the chief power of the Government being lodged in his hands. But he added, that on further consideration he had seen insuperable difficulties in the way of such a course; and that there seemed no possible objection to his becoming himself First Lord of the Treasury, unless he had admitted the proposition upon which the Duke seemed to him determined to insist, "that any individual hold-
"ing his opinions upon the Roman Catholic question
"was by those opinions disqualified from occupying that
"post. He, on the other hand, was equally determined,
"as the Duke perfectly well knew from the beginning,
"to quit the Government rather than submit to the
"degradation of exhibiting, in his own person, the
"exemplification of that principle of proscription."

With respect to the personal part of the affair, he entirely denied that any explanations had been given to others which were withheld from the Duke; and declared that the only difference between the communication which he addressed to him, and that which he sent to others of his former colleagues, was that, in his opinion, his invitation to him was "more pressing" than that which he addressed to any one else. And he justified himself for showing his second letter to the King before despatching it to the Duke, on the ground that "when
"a doubt had been expressed in any quarter, especially
"in one so important, as to his own position, it became
"necessary to have his Majesty's authority to confirm
"his own description of it." And it can hardly be denied that the eagerness which he now displayed to set himself right with Wellington is a strong proof of the sincerity of his wish for his co-operation, and of the absence of any intention to offend him.

In his reply, the Duke repeated the greater part of the

statement which he had made in the House of Lords. He still maintained that Canning's first letter had been but "a cold invitation to join the Cabinet." He declared of himself that "he was not in the habit of "deciding upon such matters hastily and in anger," alleging as a proof of the truth of this assertion, "that "he had never had a quarrel with any man in his life;" but he denied the validity of Canning's reason for showing his second letter to the King; maintaining that it was couched "in a tone of rebuke, not provoked by "anything contained in his own, and for which the "sanction of his Majesty had, as he conceived, been "very unnecessarily obtained: that being of such a "character, it had placed him in such a relation towards "his Majesty, and towards Canning himself, as his "Majesty's first Minister as to render it impossible for "him to continue in his office as Commander-in-Chief." In the discharge of the duties of that post, "he could "not be otherwise than in constant confidential commu-"nications with his Majesty on the one hand, and with "the Prime Minister on the other, as Canning would "find by-and-by, when he came to conduct the duties of "First Lord, and it was impossible for him to look for "that personal good-will and confidence in such com-"munications which are absolutely necessary, and which "he thought he deserved, after he had received" the letter of which he complained. "He knew," the Duke added, "what he owed to his Majesty; but he should "be unworthy of his favour and kindness, and quite "useless to him hereafter, if he had continued to "endeavour to serve him in the post of Commander-in-"Chief after he had received that letter. And if he "could have entertained a doubt on the subject of "Canning's letters, and the course which he ought to

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"have pursued in consequence of them, one which he "had received from his Majesty on the 13th of April,* "written, as he concluded, by Canning's advice, must "have confirmed the impression which he had previously "taken up."

With regard to Canning's own position in the Ministry, he said, that he had never recommended the King to form an Administration composed exclusively of persons adverse to the Roman Catholic claims; that he himself should have declined to co-operate in any attempt to form such an Administration, as being convinced that it would be "too weak to carry on the "Government," and that "he judged, from conversations "which he had had with the King at Windsor," that his Majesty was of the same opinion; but that in his judgment it was desirable that the head of the Administration should entertain the same sentiments as the King himself upon "the leading questions of policy, "whether domestic or foreign, and especially upon one "likely to come so frequently under discussion as the "Catholic question." (He had already expressed this doctrine in stronger terms in the House of Lords; having said there, that in selecting a Prime Minister the Sovereign chose the man "whose opinions were in con-"formity with those according to which his Majesty "had decided that the policy of the Government should "be guided.") But, at the same time, he assured Canning of his own knowledge that his Majesty set a proper value on, and was most anxious not to lose the benefit of his services in the Administration.

Those services he himself also fully appreciated; but,

* This letter of the King was a reply to that which the Duke had mentioned in his speech, in which he had conveyed to his Majesty his resignation of the office of Commander-in-Chief.

though "he was sensible that to succeed to the post of "Prime Minister was a reasonable object of ambition to "Canning," he did not know, "he said, that he claimed "to be first Minister, as the only condition on which he "could continue in the King's service; nor had it ever "occurred to him that any man could have a right to "insist upon this post in such a manner. And he had "thought it not impossible that when Canning had "considered all the circumstances," especially those of his own conduct with respect to the Catholic question, "and had contrasted his opinions on that subject with "those of the King, he might have been contented to act "in a Government which was avowedly to be "formed upon the principle of Lord Liverpool's in the "same relation to it in which he had stood when Lord "Liverpool was at its head. He must add," he said, "that his Majesty's honour and welfare, and that of the "State, were circumstances which, in his opinion, ought, "in this respect, to be considered principally and in "priority to the claims and pretensions of any indi-"vidual."

In laying down this rule he was only preaching a doctrine which he more than once, in subsequent years, confirmed by his own practice. Before sending this letter, he communicated it to some of his friends; and he was thoroughly satisfied with the light in which it placed his own conduct, and the treatment which he conceived that he had received at Canning's hands; remarking that he had had no reply to it, and that "he "believed it was the only correspondence in which that "Minister was ever engaged and had not the last "word." This circumstance, however, which he attributed to Canning's feeling that he had the worst of the argument, arose more probably from the Minister being

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desirous to avoid irritating him further by a prolonged discussion of the question, as he had not yet given up the hope of inducing him to resume the command of the army.

It seems, however, probable that, in addition to the offence which the Duke took at the style of Canning's notes, he was also influenced by a doubt of his sincerity. In the time of Pitt, Canning had lent himself to one or two proceedings which had caused many persons to look upon him as an intriguer; and which he himself would in after life have been but little inclined to defend; and the unfavourable impression of his character thus conceived was likely to be especially adopted by Wellington, as one of the most attached friends of the late Lord Londonderry; for they, in spite of the subsequent reconciliation, had never forgiven Canning for his quarrel with that nobleman, though it is now seen that there were other persons far more to be blamed than he for that unfortunate occurrence. Certainly, nothing could have been more straightforward and manly than Canning's conduct and policy for many years. Nor does it seem that the words contained in his first letter to the Duke, when he said that "he need not add how essentially "the accomplishment (of his task) must depend upon his "Grace's continuing a member of the Cabinet," deserve to be described by the Duke as "scarcely amounting to "an invitation." But it is probable that the Duke was quite correct in thinking that Canning's desire for his co-operation was mingled with, and therefore mitigated by a fear of his influence with the King. Canning was an ambitious man; official power had at all times been the chief object of his ambition, and he was naturally proud of having acquired by his talents, and desirous to retain what he had at all times considered the most honourable

situation in the whole world. He knew the almost daily intercourse which the command of the army necessitates between the Commander-in-Chief and the King: he knew also the great respect which the King entertained for the Duke; and his fondness for political conversation with every one with whom he came in contact; nor could he doubt, as was indeed the fact, that the Duke's sense of duty to his Sovereign would not have allowed him to withhold his opinion on any point on which it was asked; though he was not aware of a rule which Wellington had laid down for himself, never to begin any subject with his Majesty.

In spite, however, of Canning's mixed feelings on the subject, he was desirous that the Duke should resume the command of the army (which he kept open for him during the whole of his administration), and also a place in his Cabinet. To the latter step the Duke would never have consented; but on the former he professed to be less inflexible. He told his friends that if the King should desire him to resume the command of his army, he did not see how, as a soldier, he could refuse it; but he should require a letter from Canning, admitting that his tenure of that office was to be wholly unconnected with politics. And he further felt that he should be justified in insisting upon such a written acknowledgment of his political independence, as "an atonement for "the rebuke and insult contained in the former letter" of which he so much complained. In fact, he did insist upon it so rigorously, that though before the end of May he received a letter from the King himself, expressive of his Majesty's pleasure at hearing that he had expressed his willingness to give the Government advice upon military matters, and of his hope that he would "recall his resignation of the command of the army,"

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he refused to do so, stating that though he had made some suggestions with respect to the position of that portion of the British army which was still in Portugal, his conduct in that respect had been dictated partly by the consideration that he himself had been a party to the despatch of those troops to that country: and still more by "anxiety for the honour of his Majesty's arms, "and by gratitude for his Majesty's constant favour and "kindness;" but that "it had not been intended to "manifest any desire to withdraw his resignation of the "office of Commander-in-Chief; the reasons for which, as "originally laid before his Majesty, still continued in "force."* And he urged, that "were he now to recall his "resignation, he should by that act admit that he had "not been justified in retiring, and should disable himself "from rendering useful service to his Majesty in future."

It can hardly be asserted that the Duke was warranted in characterizing that second letter from Canning as he did characterize it, namely, as one of rebuke and insult; or in persevering in his resignation of his military office on such grounds. But it is probable that, though that resignation had not been in the least concerted with his former colleagues, the withdrawal of so many of them contributed to confirm him in his resolution to persist in his own, from his feeling that it had left the present Government in such a state of weakness as would render it incapable of carrying many indispensable measures, and afraid even of trying their strength on any which were likely to provoke any vigorous opposition.

It will have been seen that in his letter to Canning, and also in his speech to the Lords, the Duke had given

* See the King's and his letters in Stapleton's Life and Times, &c., p. 597-8.

more weight than is usually allowed to his Sovereign's political opinions and personal feelings: more consideration certainly than has ever been shown for the opinions of his successors, or than it would be easy to evince since the passing of the Reform Bill; even if the youthful age at which her present Majesty came to the throne had not prevented her private opinions upon political questions from being publicly known; and if her sex had not made it unfitting to introduce her name into parliamentary discussions. But in the case of George IV., the Duke was probably partly influenced by the notoriety which had been given to his Majesty's own opinions by the length of time during which the Catholic question had been under discussion, and by the embarrassing circumstances which had more than once arisen out of it, and partly also by his opinion of the King's talents, which he, in common with all who came in contact with his Majesty, rated very highly; and of his virtues, which he himself rated far more favourably than it was fashionable to estimate them.* At the same time there was nothing servile in the deference which he thus thought proper to be exhibited to his Sovereign's personal feelings. On the contrary, we have already seen how four years earlier he had pressed Canning on him, in spite of the strong repugnance to that statesman which existed in the royal breast; and we shall see, at a subsequent period, how resolutely he forced upon his Majesty this very measure of Catholic Emancipation, when he was convinced that the welfare of the kingdom required it: so that ardent and constant as his feeling of loyalty and obedience to his royal master was, it was an obedience neither

* See Raikes's Diary, i., 91, where the Duke speaks of George IV. as having presented a medley of the most opposite qualities, with a *great preponderance* of good.

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unreasoning nor unreasonable. It was a loyalty always kept in due subordination to the still higher duty which, as a patriot, he owed to his country; or perhaps it may be said, which sprang out of that higher duty, and served and obeyed the Sovereign as the highest and most perfect representative of that country.

There can be no doubt that even such a modified countenance of the Government on his part as would have been afforded by his becoming Commander-in-Chief again, without resuming his place in the Cabinet, would have given it strength; and there was no doubt also that he was right in thinking that it wanted strength. It was quite true, as Canning said, that he himself had not gone over to the Whigs, but that they had come over to him; but still the fact remained, that his administration was formed by a coalition, and coalitions are always unpopular in this country, and contain in themselves a most evident and undeniable proof of weakness. But the events of the next few weeks tended rather to widen than to close the breach that had taken place. A Bill on the subject of the importation of corn had been prepared by the Cabinet before the illness of Lord Liverpool, which imposed a duty on imported grain varying with the fluctuations in the home price, and which contained the germ of the sliding scale eventually adopted; nor had it been suffered to be delayed by the precarious state of the minister, but had been introduced by Canning, and was rapidly passing through its different stages in the House of Commons. A measure, however, for preventing the frauds in taking the averages, for which the existing system of warehousing opened the door, had also been discussed in Lord Liverpool's Cabinet; but though, in the opinion of many friends of the agricultural interest, quite indispensable to the working of the

new Bill, it was not now brought forward, in consequence, as Wellington thought, of the weakness of the new Government. Before the Corn Bill came up from the Commons, he had announced to his friends that if it were brought forward in the Upper House "without its con-"joint measure respecting the averages and warehousing, "he should oppose it;" but when it did so come, he preferred proposing the insertion of a clause which, by forbidding foreign corn to be taken out of bond until the average price should have reached 66*s.*, would, to use his own words, "have the double effect of placing the ware-"housing system on a secure footing, and of remedying "any frauds that might occur in taking the averages."

He had communicated his intention to Mr. Huskisson, the President of the Board of Trade, and owing to a slight vagueness in the terms of Huskisson's answer, had been led to believe that the Government would willingly agree to his amendment: but it appeared that he had misunderstood Huskisson, for the Ministry strongly opposed the clause which he had brought forward, and, on its being adopted by the House of Lords, threw up the Bill—not without both feeling and expressing great annoyance at its loss: Canning avowing "his "disappointment that so great a man as the Duke of "Wellington should have allowed himself to be made an "instrument in the hands of others;" while some of his supporters were far more unmeasured in their attacks upon him for having thus defeated a Bill to which, as a member of Lord Liverpool's Government, which had originally prepared it, they considered him pledged. It was the 18th of June on which the debate took place in which these reproaches were thus levelled at him. It is recorded by the great historian* of Rome, that when the

* 'Livy,' xxxviii., 51.

tribunes of the people in that city brought an impeachment against Scipio on some frivolous pretext, he deigned to make no further exculpation of himself than to remind them that he was standing before them on the anniversary of the day on which, on the field of Zama, by the overthrow of the great Hannibal he had established the glory and safety of his country. Wellington's modesty would have prevented him from boasting in a similar way of his own still greater achievement, but Peel, who stood forward as his champion, urged with great effect upon his hearers that the anniversary of Waterloo ought not to hear petulant charges on insufficient grounds urged against the conqueror of Napoleon: and his argument was the stronger, because it was not his only one; since he was able to affirm, of his own knowledge, that the Duke had not brought forward his amendment in a spirit of opposition to the Government, or at the instigation of any of its secret enemies; a statement, the truth of which is amply corroborated by the fact of Wellington having announced to his friends his opinion of the indispensable nature of such a clause some weeks before he knew what course would be adopted by the Cabinet with respect to it.

In whatever degree his separation from Canning was founded on solid reason, or on erroneous prejudice, it is clear that it was a most unfortunate event for the country, as being the first visible schism in the old Tory party, which, though in this instance the Whigs came over to Canning's section of the Tories, ended in that section going over to the Whigs, and uniting with and ultimately outrunning them in such a development of their principles as the old Constitutional Whigs of the last century would have stood aghast at. Whether time, and the conviction which must gradually have forced

itself upon each of the value of each other's services, and the real patriotism of each other's motives, would have healed the breach between the Duke and the Prime Minister, must remain uncertain, since the Parliament had hardly been prorogued when Canning was seized with an illness, caused in no small degree by the labour and anxieties of his situation, which unhappily proved fatal, and on the 8th of August he died, leaving behind him a reputation which, since his premature death, has been constantly on the rise; though the most acute and most candid of his judges have been unable to decide what part he would have taken in the domestic policy of the next reign, or how far his genius would have been able to influence its course, or his eloquence to temper its extravagance.

He was succeeded as First Lord of the Treasury by Lord Goderich, who (though in reality there was scarcely any alteration in the Government except that necessitated by Canning's death, whose post of Chancellor of the Exchequer was occupied by Mr. Herries) has still obtained the unenviable distinction of being the head of the very weakest administration mentioned in our history; since, without having met Parliament for a single day, it fell to pieces in less than five months through the dissensions among its members, and the utter incompetency of its chief. One remarkable event alone signalized its tenure of office. Almost the last act of the lamented Canning had been the conclusion of a treaty with France and Russia, with a view to the termination of the Greek rebellion; by which the three contracting powers agreed to offer to the Ottoman Porte, and also to the Provisional Government of the Greeks, their joint mediation; at the same time requiring both the belligerents to consent to an armistice, with a view to the commencement

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of a formal negotiation, in which the conditions of the pacification to be proposed to the two contending nations were very nearly identical with those which have been already mentioned as having been framed by Nesselrode. Nor were these offers and demands intended to remain empty words: on the contrary, in the event of the mediation being rejected and the armistice refused, the three contracting powers bound themselves not to relax in their efforts, but to endeavour to compel the two nations to the desired pacification by an open display of their power; and in order to carry out this purpose, they agreed to send corresponding instructions to the admirals commanding their respective fleets in the Mediterranean.

As was proved in this instance, there is always danger that a display of force, unless absolutely overpowering, will lead to its exertion, however such a result may be contrary to the intentions of those who display it. No instructions could have more strictly enjoined the three admirals to take extreme care that their operations should not degenerate into hostilities than those which they received from their Governments: nor does it appear that they had any wish except faithfully to carry out their orders, and yet they had hardly reached the Greek waters when they became engaged in a pitched battle with the Turkish fleet under circumstances which gave their conduct the appearance of wanton aggression, and threatened at first greatly to embarrass and retard the arrangements which all parties desired to promote.

The Porte had without hesitation rejected our mediation; and as Ibrahim was abating nothing of the merciless cruelty with which he had been carrying on the war in the Morea, the allied admirals resolved to enter the Bay of Navarino, the "Sandy Pylos" of Nestor and Homer, where his fleet lay under the command of Moharem Bey,

and to renew the demands of their Governments for an armistice, which their presence would be able to enforce at least by sea. Moharem Bey had of course no power to grant a suspension of arms without a reference to Ibrahim, who was conducting his operations on land; but one or two communications of mutual remonstrance passed between him and the British commander, Admiral Codrington, till their peaceful tenor was interrupted by the discharge of fire-arms, which in a few minutes brought on a general engagement. So entirely accidental and unintentional was the first shot, that each party denied that it had proceeded from them, though the probability is that Codrington's statement was correct, that it was directed at a boat's crew belonging to the Dartmouth by a Turkish fire-ship: the action, as was inevitable, terminated in the entire destruction of the Turkish fleet. The allied squadrons consisted of ten ships of the line, ten frigates, and a few smaller vessels: the Turkish fleet was by far more numerous, but it contained only three ships of the line; and the inferiority of the vessels themselves, and of the skill of their seamen, was still greater than that of their apparent force. They were nearly all taken or destroyed: Ibrahim withdrew to Egypt, and the Greeks proclaimed their independence, electing Count Capo d'Istrias their President; but these events were so far from quelling the spirit of the Sultan, that they seemed to rather harden him in his resolution to make no terms with rebels whose revolt was in his eyes the more foul and the more to be resisted by reason of its success.

CHAPTER XLI.

Wellington becomes Prime Minister — His general views of policy — The Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—Huskisson and the Canningites leave the Government—Wellington's speech on the Catholic question—Affairs of Portugal—and of Turkey—The Clare Election.

THIS was the position of affairs when, on the 29th of January, 1828, the British Parliament re-assembled, and was met by the Duke of Wellington as Prime Minister. He had resumed his post as Commander-in-Chief when Lord Goderich succeeded Canning as First Lord of the Treasury, keeping himself, however, unconnected with the politics of the new Government; and when, in the first week of the year, that nobleman resigned his office, he had been solicited by the King to undertake the task of constructing an Administration in terms which, in spite of the incompetency for the task which he still avowed, he felt it impossible as a loyal subject to refuse; though even then he would not himself have assumed the position of the ostensible head of the Government had it not been the unanimous wish of his colleagues that he should do so. It was at first little more than a re-construction of Lord Goderich's Cabinet, with the omission of Lord Lansdowne, who insisted on resigning the Seals of the Home Office; and with one or two unimportant changes of place among those who continued in the Cabinet. The King's anxious

desire had been, that above all things the Duke should form him a strong Ministry;* and with a view to such strength he had expressed a hope that Lord Lansdowne and one or two other Whig Lords whom he named, and also those members of the late Ministry who were looked upon as Canning's especial followers should make a part of the new Cabinet. The Whigs refused; the Canningites — as Huskisson, Lord Palmerston, Lord Dudley, and Mr. C. Grant were called—consented; and the new Cabinet consisted of the Duke himself, with Mr. Goulburn as Chancellor of the Exchequer; Peel, Lord Dudley, and Huskisson, as Secretaries of State for Home Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and the Colonies; Lord Lyndhurst retained the Great Seals, Lord Melville presided over the Board of Control; Mr. C. Grant was at the head of the Board of Trade; Lord Palmerston, Secretary at War; Mr. Herries, Master of the Mint; while Lord Bathurst and Lord Ellenborough became President of the Council and Lord Privy Seal.

Wellington himself resigned the command of the army; and gratified his own feelings of friendship, as well as his judgment, by conferring the appointment on Lord Hill; who, as we have seen, was the most trusted of his lieutenants in the Peninsular war. From his thorough knowledge of Hill's high qualities he had conceived a peculiar regard for him, which he had displayed in a most generous manner several years before; when, hearing that Hill's family had met with severe pecuniary loss, he spontaneously wrote to beg him to use his purse; assuring him that having a large sum of money at his command, "he could not apply it in a "manner more satisfactory to himself than in accom- "modating Hill, to whom he was under so many obliga-

* See the Duke's letter to Peel.—Peel's Memoirs, i. 11.

"tions."* And in the same spirit hearing, while still in command of the army of occupation, that the general was suffering from bad health, he placed his house at Paris at his disposal, and relieved him from all duties which could interfere with his perfect recovery. Hill, who had never taken any prominent part in politics, continued to hold his honourable office, and to discharge its duties to the satisfaction of all parties for nearly fifteen years, till his declining health compelled him to relinquish it; and then he was in his turn succeeded in it by his old commander, the Duke, who kept it till the end of his life.

The Cabinet was apparently not altogether such as Wellington would have chosen had he been wholly unfettered. He excused himself to Lord Eldon for not having consulted him during the negotiations for its construction, on the ground that he feared the aged Chancellor would not much approve of it; and as his own opinion on Catholic Emancipation was as yet wholly unchanged, it is probable that he would have preferred a greater preponderance of those who agreed with him on that subject: still it contained much conspicuous administrative ability, and his own well-known force of will rendered it probable that the royal wish of having a strong Government would be fulfilled; and this consideration rendered the new Administration generally acceptable to the nation, which was weary and somewhat ashamed of the frequent changes which had latterly taken place; while, on the other hand, the continuance in office of those who were especially looked upon as Canning's adherents—of Mr. Huskisson, the greatest financial statesman of the day, of Mr. C. Grant,†

* Sidney's 'Life of Hill,' 321, 323.

† Afterwards known as Lord Glenelg.

of Lord Dudley and Lord Palmerston, was looked upon as a guarantee that the principles of foreign and also of commercial policy, more liberal than those adopted in the earlier part of the century, and which Canning had introduced and had hoped to carry out, would not now be departed from.

There were of course exceptions to the general satisfaction, and some murmurers complained of the Secretary at War being the leader of the Lower House (though in fact he was only acting as such during the absence of Mr. Peel, who by his acceptance of office had been compelled to vacate his seat until he should be re-elected), and regretted to observe in such an arrangement an approach to a military system; while Lord John Russell suggested a fear lest the very habits of command to which the Duke owed his military successes, might prove dangerous in the chief Minister of a free country; and these objections were brought forward in the Upper House also by Lord King, who charged Wellington with having engrossed and concentrated in himself the whole civil and military authority of the State; pronounced that the presence of Lord Dudley and Mr. Huskisson in the Cabinet were no guarantees for its policy, inasmuch as they were mere satellites of their chief; and complained that the statement made in the last century, that there was behind the throne a power greater than the throne itself was now reversed; not indeed that there was not such a power now, but that it was before the throne, and threw it in the shade. But these attacks made but little impression on men in general, and the eminent leader of the Whigs, Lord Grey, took the earliest opportunity of averring that it was hardly possible for any person to feel more warm admiration of Wellington than he did; and,

though some objections which he entertained to the composition of the Administration prevented him from giving it his support, he made public protest against being reckoned a member of the Opposition.

To general cavils and objections, such as Lord King's and Lord John Russell's, Wellington of course disdained to reply; but on the very first night of the session a fierce attack was led by Lord Holland on the passage in the King's speech which referred to the Battle of Navarino. The speech stated that "His Majesty deeply "lamented that this conflict should have occurred with "the naval force of our ancient ally," but still expressed "a confident hope that this untoward event would not "be followed by further hostilities." Of these sentences, Lord Holland objected to almost every word. He denied that Turkey was "our ancient ally." He appealed to "Johnson's Dictionary," and denied that the battle had been "untoward" in the sense ascribed to the word by the great lexicographer, and by common usage. Johnson rendered the unhappy adjective in its first meaning, "froward, vexatious, perverse." If then it were intended by its use to cast any blame on the gallant officer who had led our fleet to victory, Lord Holland, whose zeal had been so often displayed in the cause of Napoleon, now with equal energy offered himself as the admiral's champion. If it were meant to call the battle an accident unfavourable in any point of view, whether to the independence of Greece or to the peace of Europe, on that the noble lord joined issue with the framer of the speech, and affirmed it to have promoted the enfranchisement of Greece, and to have been a step, a great step, to the pacification of Europe.

To such an assailant the task of reply was easy. Wellington justified the appellation of "our ancient

ally," which had been given to the Sultan, not indeed entering into an arithmetical computation of how many years are required to invest an alliance with a character of antiquity, as if it were a poem* or a pipe of port wine; but reminding his hearers how beneficial an effect on the interests of Europe our close friendship with the Porte had proved in 1812, when, by freeing the Emperor Alexander from all apprehensions on that side of his dominions, it had left him at liberty to turn his undivided attention to the French invasion; and had enabled him by his successful resistance to it to strike one of the most important blows which was given to the overgrown authority of Napoleon; and he showed that no event had better deserved the epithet of "unto-"ward" than the recent battle, in its equally usual sense of "inconvenient and unfortunate," since it had been particularly stated in the treaty of July that the movements of our fleet were not intended to lead to hostilities, that the contracting powers were to take no part whatever in offensive operations, but were to act solely in the spirit of conciliation; since it was an occurrence which might very easily have involved us in war; and since, in addition to both these considerations, it bore the appearance of having been unprovoked by any act of aggression on the part of the Turks, and unjustified by any previous notice given by us of our intentions. He disclaimed in the most ample manner all intention of casting the very slightest blame on Codrington, who, he admitted, had had a very difficult part to play, and whose rectitude of intention, as well as whose skill and valour, it was impossible to doubt. No reply was attempted to his argument: Lord Grey and Lord Lansdowne avowed

* Est vetus atque probus centum qui perficit annos.—*Hor.* The best judges are content with a somewhat shorter time of probation for port.

their concurrence with his sentiments on the battle; and, in point of fact, the expression which had been complained of was far milder than that applied to it by Codrington himself, who, in his despatch announcing the occurrence, had characterized it as "a disastrous "extremity, which he would have avoided if other means "had been open to him."*

In a subsequent debate on the same transaction, the Duke expressed his approbation of the treaty of July, and his intention of still making every effort to carry out its provisions "in spirit as well as letter." He laid down with great precision what he affirmed to be the general rule of our foreign policy, that "no country "had a right to interfere in the foreign affairs of another "nation, except where the law of necessity or great "political interests rendered interference indispensable." That "non-interference was the rule, and interference "the exception." But he also maintained that "the "case created by the conflict of the Turks and Greeks "constituted such an exception, and justified the means "that had been resorted to, though at first it had cer- "tainly been intended that those means should have "been limited to negotiation and diplomacy."

He also on this, and on one subsequent occasion, took notice of some attacks which had been made on those members of the Administration who were generally known as Canningites; first for taking part in the Government without a sufficient guarantee for the maintenance of their former leader's policy, though it was indeed reported that Huskisson had stated that he had received from the Duke a guarantee for the mode in which affairs were to be carried on before he consented

* See the despatch in the 'Annual Register,' 1827, p. 412; Append. to Chronicle.

to join him. And secondly, for taking any part in it whatever while presided over by such an enemy of the leader for whose memory they professed unabated attachment and reverence as the Duke. Wellington looked on these attacks as in a still higher degree attacks on himself. With respect to the guarantee spoken of, he declared that none had been given; he argued that, if any had been asked, those who asked for it would have been "proclaiming their own shame by "avowing that they had connected themselves with "one from whom guarantees were necessary." And he avowed his disbelief in the accuracy of the report of the language attributed to Huskisson; who, he thought, had in all probability rather said that "the men of "whom the Government was composed were in them-"selves a guarantee to the public that their measures "would be such as would be conducive to his Majesty's "honour and interests, and to the happiness of the peo-"ple." And he protested with great energy "against "any such imputation being cast upon him as that he "ever entertained any personal hostility to Mr. Can-"ning." He asserted that even the step which he had taken of quitting the Government had made no difference in the "habits which had marked his personal "intercourse with him;" and, going still further, he declared that he had had no political hostility to his Government, and had never intended that the clause of which he proposed the addition to the Corn Bill, should cause its rejection. At a later period of the session he gave an undeniable proof of the sincerity of his disclaimer of personal hostility to the deceased minister, by taking upon himself, as the head of the Government, to propose to Parliament to grant a pension to Canning's family; and in the speech with which he introduced the

subject, he not only gave the most frank and unstinted praise to his great and varied abilities, but mentioned circumstances which he believed to be unknown to anyone but himself, illustrative of his admirable disinterestedness in money matters, which made the proposed grant the more becoming to the country in exact proportion as it was the more necessary to his family. In spite of a feeble though vehement opposition the proposed pension was carried almost unanimously; and by a singular specimen of happy foresight, it was settled, after the death of the lamented statesman's widow, on her second son, who soon, by the death of his elder brother, became the representative of his family; and who as Governor-General of India at a time of unprecedented difficulty and danger has manfully confronted the danger, and displayed no inconsiderable skill in the steps he has taken to extricate from its difficulties the vast empire committed to his government: having, by the resolution and capacity which he has thus shown, gained the marked approval of his Sovereign, and earned for himself an addition to those honours of the Peerage which have seldom been more worthily bestowed than when they were conferred to grace the memory of his illustrious father.

It was ultimately seen that for a while the King's wish had been accomplished (though hardly, perhaps, in the sense in which he uttered it), and that the Government was strong; but at first it showed some signs of weakness both externally and internally.

Parliament had not been assembled a month before it received a defeat in the House of Commons on the question of the maintenance of the laws affecting the eligibility of Protestant Dissenters to different offices. Those laws had long been in an anomalous and most indefensible state. They had originally been enacted

in the most disturbed period of the reign of Charles II., and their object had been the exclusion from places of trust of the Roman Catholics rather than of the Puritans. They required every person who should be appointed to any office, civil or military, and even to places which could hardly be called offices, such as seats in Parliament or in a corporation, at stated times to show his adherence to the Church of England, by taking the sacrament of the holy communion according to her rites. It was notorious that hundreds who were thus bound by law to communicate did not do so; and every year, for nearly a century, a Bill of Indemnity had been passed to protect such persons from the penalties to which they had become liable. The repeal of the Act that enforced this injunction had been often urged; and in February of this year it was again brought forward in the House of Commons by Lord John Russell; and, though the ministers opposed it by many specious and by some practical arguments, by which they certainly succeeded in proving that, carried out as it now was, the Act complained of produced no real grievance, the motion was carried by no very inconsiderable majority. The ministers took anxious counsel together on this defeat, but decided wisely and justifiably that, considering the state of parties, and the events of the last twelve months, which (including the existing Cabinet) had seen four administrations, their duty was not to abandon* their posts, but rather to meet the difficulty before them by a compromise which would satisfy at the same time both the friends of religious liberty and the authorities of the Established Church.

Having this object in view, Peel, to whom as Member for the University of Oxford, the arrangement of the

* See Peel's Memoirs, i., 69.

affair was chiefly entrusted by his colleagues, after a lengthened discussion with several of the ablest and most influential of the bishops, framed a declaration, calculated to secure the safety and interests of the Established Church, subscription to which should in future be required instead of that participation in the sacrament which, adopted as it had been merely as a qualification for office, had been rarely better than a mockery, and too often a scandalous profanation. Even the advocates of the repeal of the existing law did not object to the substitution of this declaration for the sacramental test, and the proposal of Lord John Russell, thus amended, was carried almost unanimously in the House of Commons. It still, however, met with a vigorous resistance in the House of Lords from Lord Eldon, who was exceedingly indignant at the conduct of the ministers. In his private correspondence he affirmed that they "had run away like a parcel of "cowards." And he now, in his place in Parliament, reflected with some asperity on their adoption of a measure brought on by their adversaries. His anger was probably somewhat sharpened by the suspicion that it had been the contemplation of this and similar measures to which the omission to offer him some honorary post in the Government was to be ascribed. He affirmed the law, the repeal of which was thus proposed, to be one "which two contracting nations had laid down as "fundamental," and which was "necessary to the pre-"servation of the Constitution." He admitted that "no legislator could legislate inviolably for posterity;" but maintained that "posterity ought not, without "ample reason, to legislate against laws" of such a character. Amendments also were proposed with the most opposite intentions. He wished to insert in the

declaration a clause by which the subscriber should avow himself to be a Protestant,* in order to prevent the present measure from being made a stepping-stone to Catholic emancipation; while Lord Holland, on the other hand, desired to omit the words which had been included in the declaration as passed by the House of Commons, affirming that the subscriber assented to it, "on the true faith of a Christian in the presence of "God," in order to admit the Jews. Wellington, who conducted the debate with great temper, justified the conduct of the Government in adopting the conciliatory policy on which they had determined. He admitted that, though not altogether approving of the existing law, they would have been contented to let it remain as one which was productive of no practical evil; but he also declared that they believed the present Bill, modified as since its first introduction it had been with the consent of the prelates of the Established Church, was calculated rather to strengthen than to weaken the Church by the removal of a subject of complaint which threatened the religious peace of the community. He also contended forcibly enough that the Church could not possibly have derived any real strength from the existence of a law which was incessantly violated, and of which the violators were as constantly indemnified by Parliament. With respect to Lord Eldon's amendments, of which there were more than one all having the same object, while he declared that "in supporting "the Bill before the House, he had no intention to "pledge himself either on one side or the other as to "the Catholic question," he objected to them as calculated to prevent Roman Catholic officers from holding commissions in either the army or the navy. He also

* See Twiss's 'Life of Eldon,' iii., 38-43.

refused to consent to the amendment proposed by Lord Holland, because, as he truly affirmed, it had never been the intention of the law in this country that the Jews should be admitted to office. And he insisted, with great propriety, that those who desired their admission ought to bring "the question fairly before Parliament," and not attempt to carry an end of which the nation in general would greatly disapprove by a side-wind. Those who in subsequent years affirmed that the exclusion of the Jews from Parliament was but an accidental effect of the declaration, which had not been contemplated by its framers, must apparently have argued in complete ignorance of this discussion. The Bill passed by a very large majority, and it is not probable that even the most strenuous of Lord Eldon's admirers have at any subsequent period regretted that his efforts for its rejection were unsuccessful.

There was also at first some of that internal weakness in the Cabinet which is inseparable from a want of cordial union in the members of such a body. If the Duke had consulted his own wishes solely, he would probably not have included Huskisson in his administration at all; but on this point he had yielded to Peel, who had made the appointment of that statesman a condition indispensable to his own acceptance of the seals of the Home Office.* He regarded him, however, with some distrust, which is believed to have been increased by the discussions among the ministers themselves on the details of the new Corn Bill, in which great deference was shown by his colleagues to Huskisson's financial knowledge and ability, and which, as finally settled by the Cabinet, did not contain the clause which he himself had introduced into the House of Lords in the preceding

* Twiss's 'Life of Eldon,' iii., 34.

year. There is no reason to doubt that he retained the opinion which he had formerly expressed on the subject, but he yielded it to the majority of his colleagues, and, after the Bill had passed through the House of Commons, he successfully advocated it in the House of Lords, as one which had been carefully drawn with a view to conciliate both those who maintained that the importation of foreign corn should be wholly prohibited, and that far smaller party who pressed for its unrestricted admission into our markets. A more suitable opportunity for the recapitulation of the arguments on both sides will occur hereafter; it is sufficient here to say that the Bill now introduced established a sliding scale of taxation, imposing a duty so high as to be almost prohibitory when the price of home-grown corn was low, and lowering the tax to a purely nominal sum when that price was so high as to distress the labouring poor. The principle admitted by almost all at that time being that the particular burdens which were imposed upon the land in this country, and the overpowering expediency of making the nation in a great degree independent of foreign regions for its staple food, rendered it fair as well as wise to give a moderate protection to our own corn-growers; while a due regard for the lower classes made it equally desirable that, in times of scarcity and dearness that protection to the comparatively rich should not inflict distress and want upon the absolutely poor. The details of the Bill met with considerable opposition, chiefly from the supporters of the agricultural interest, who maintained that the protection which it afforded was insufficient; but it finally passed by a large majority; and though subsequently assailed by violent clamour, and by many solid objections, was almost universally admitted at the

time to have effected a very great improvement in the existing law.

In whatever degree it contributed to his final rupture with Wellington, it was the last work of its chief author as a member of the Government. Huskisson, like his old leader, Canning, was a vigorous opponent of Parliamentary Reform; but he so far differed from that lamented statesman, that he was more willing to open the door to a process which should gradually remove the most palpable absurdity of our representative system, by giving to large but unrepresented towns the representatives of which smaller places had been deprived on their conviction of notorious and general corruption.

An opportunity was now offered of exemplifying this system on a small scale, by the disfranchisement of Penryn and East Retford, two boroughs of a long standing and undisguised venality, on which all parties were agreed; and by the proposal of the Whigs to transfer the seats thus left vacant to Manchester and Birmingham. The Duke was willing to sanction the transfer of the seats of one of the places to be disfranchised to a large town, but contended (without much reason, since Penryn and East Retford were both towns) that, on the principle of a fair division between the town and country interests, those vacated by the disfranchisement of the other should be transferred to the adjacent hundred. The compromise conceived in this spirit was agreed to by the administration collectively, and its adoption was made a Cabinet question. With this understanding the Bill for the disfranchisement of Penryn and the enfranchisement of Manchester was carried through the House of Commons, and sent up to the Lords, its reception by whom was known to be very doubtful. Unfortunately, before that question was

decided, the case of East Retford and Birmingham came on in the Lower House; and under a belief that the measure for giving the Penryn seats to Manchester would be lost in the Lords, the Liberal party, appealing to a former speech of Huskisson's, claimed his vote in favour of Birmingham. He, conceiving himself pledged to support the transfer of the vacant seats in the first instance to a town, and sharing in the apprehensions that the pretensions of Manchester would not be favourably regarded by the Peers, admitted the justice of their claim, and, in opposition to all his colleagues, voted for the transference of the East Retford seats to Birmingham. He looked upon himself as left at liberty to do so by the admitted probability that the enfranchisement of Manchester would be refused by the Lords (as indeed it subsequently was); but still, feeling that his difference from the rest of the Cabinet on the question rendered his continuance in office a question of doubtful expediency, or at all events one which it was not his province to decide, he, on returning home from the House, at once wrote to the Duke, stating that after the vote which "he had found himself compelled to give," he owed it to his Grace "to lose no time in affording "him an opportunity of placing his office in other "hands, as the only means in his power of preventing "the injury to the King's service which might ensue "from the appearance of disunion in his Majesty's "councils, however unfounded in reality, or however "unimportant in itself the question which had given "rise to that appearance."

The Duke was probably more nettled at what he looked upon as Huskisson's breach of faith towards the rest of the Ministry, than with the mere fact of his opposition to them on such a subject, though he

certainly also regarded that as a proof of disunion which it was desirable to avoid; and under the influence of these feelings he at once resolved upon accepting Huskisson's resignation, and laid his letter containing it before the King. The moment that Huskisson received from him intimation of his having done so, he was seized with consternation, and gladly availed himself of Lord Dudley's offer, who proposed to go to the Duke, and explain to him that he had mistaken the object of Huskisson's letter, which was not to resign his office himself, but to spare the Duke's delicacy in the event of his deciding as Prime Minister that his recent vote was incompatible with his retention of office. The Duke replied that he had made no mistake; that it was a positive resignation. The first messenger having failed to attain the desired olive-branch, a second was had recourse to, and Lord Palmerston proceeded to Apsley House on a similar errand to Lord Dudley's, and met with similar ill success. Then Huskisson wrote himself to the Duke, treating his recent vote as one of no great consequence, and giving the same explanation of his letter which he had previously sent by his two ambassadors. An admirer of Canning's had called him the best logician in Europe, and it was Huskisson who had been the pupil of that lamented statesman and orator; not Wellington, whose early training had taught him to rely on other weapons for victory than those furnished by any school of rhetoric. But Canning himself could hardly have pinned an antagonist with a more irresistible dilemma than was now offered to his late coadjutor by the warrior Duke. "If Huskisson's first note did contain a formal resignation, "he had no reason to complain that it had been accepted. If it had been meant as a sham, it ought

"never to have been sent." There is but little doubt that the Duke in his heart believed that it had been meant as a sham, and that he not only felt, as he expressed it, that it had left him but one of two alternatives (either to accept the resignation which it contained, or to solicit Huskisson to remain in the Administration, which "would have exposed both himself "and the Government to very painful misconstruc-"tion"); but that he was indignant at the attempt to trick him which he fancied he discerned in the letter; and he was strengthened in this latter view of the affair by the eagerness which Lord Dudley and Lord Palmerston, acting as Huskisson's friends, showed to impress him with their explanation of the letter.

As has been already said, the Duke was probably not very glad of Huskisson's presence in the Cabinet, though fully appreciating his financial abilities; still, he did nothing in a hurry, and four days after the debate in the House of Commons he informed Lord Dudley, as Huskisson's friend, "that the matter was "not at an end. He himself could suggest nothing, "lest it should look like dictation or collusion; but "Huskisson as a man of sense and a man of the world, "must know very well what he ought to do." This was something more than a hint to Huskisson to withdraw his first letter; but he probably saw in so conciliatory a message a proof of the high value set on his services, and, having already requested an audience of the King for the purpose of explaining to his Majesty that he had not intended lightly to desert his service, to which request he had as yet received no answer, he brought himself to think that he could not with honour withdraw his letter until he had had an opportunity of explaining to his royal master the object which he

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had in view in sending it. Accordingly he abstained from saying a word which could appear like a withdrawal of his letter, and after waiting two days, Wellington at last acted upon his resignation, and appointed his old quartermaster, Sir George Murray, to the vacant office.

A few days afterwards, Huskisson entered into a long and rather angry explanation of the causes of what he chose to call his removal from office. He said that "of "the motives of that removal he could explain nothing, "they belonged to others; and he doubted not that they "had been suggested by a sense of duty;" but before the end of his speech, he more than insinuated that as his admission into Wellington's Cabinet had been unpopular with a party among the Duke's supporters, he had been sacrificed to their jealousy, and "it had been "deemed expedient, for the interests of the King's Go-"vernment, to come to a closer union with one party by "casting off the other." Wellington did not think it consistent with either his dignity or his duty to take any public notice of the subject, or of Huskisson's statements; but the resignation already made brought others in its train; since Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, and Mr. C. Grant, being the whole body of Canningites in the Cabinet, thinking that great eagerness had been shown to get rid of Huskisson, whom they now considered their leader, and also that that eagerness evinced an intention of departing from Canning's policy, also resigned their offices, and were succeeded by Lord Aberdeen, Sir Henry Hardinge, and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald. Nothing can be plainer than that to talk as Huskisson did of his deprivation of his post being the act of others, and not his own, was absurd, and even at variance with the fact. That he wrote in a hurry, under the pressure

of somewhat agitated feelings, was admitted by himself, and under the influence of this excitement he expressed his purpose of resigning his office more strongly than he probably intended. It was remarkable that, as he urged in his explanation, he had once in Lord Liverpool's time voted in a similar manner against his colleagues on a measure of Lord Castlereagh's; but in that instance, instead of writing, he had called upon Lord Liverpool, and explained the motives which had caused his vote; and Peel, who on the present occasion had replied to his statement in the House of Commons, pointed out that, if he had not wished to resign now, he should again have adopted the same course. It certainly was unfortunate that he did not do so, since there is little doubt that his explanation would have been accepted; and since the secession of his friends threw them into the arms of the Whigs, and, by the new connections in which it entangled them, coupled with the weight that one of their body has had almost ever since in the councils of the nation, has had a very material influence upon the policy of the country in general, both at home and abroad.

His resignation, however, apparently did not diminish the zeal nor the efficiency with which the Cabinet applied itself to one of the great tasks which the eminent administrative ability of its chief set before it; namely, that of reducing the expenses of the State, which the prodigality of past times had suffered to swell to an undue amount, and which the unsettled state of affairs since the termination of the war had not yet allowed to be properly investigated. Wellington at once directed the attention of his colleagues to this important point; and they laboured at it with a successful energy which may well raise our astonishment when we compare the greatness of the reductions which they

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effected with the shortness of the time that they remained in power. Pensions, sinecures, and useless posts were abolished with an unsparing hand. In the estimates for the army, navy, and ordnance, an improved system of management enabled great retrenchments to be carried out without any diminution of the efficiency of those most important establishments. And so vast was the saving thus effected, that in the year 1830, after having paid off above eight millions of the National Debt, and having further reduced that burden by a reduction of the interest of a considerable portion of it, the Ministry were able to take off taxes to the amount of nearly three millions and a half, without danger to the revenue, and with a vast increase in the comfort and well-being of the poorer classes. And at the same time, combining in one felicitous measure the relief of the mother country with the reinforcement of the colonies, they introduced a measure calculated to produce a permanent diminution of the heaviest of parochial burdens, the poor rates, by enabling parishes to mortgage them for a short term, in order to promote the emigration of their surplus population to those distant dominions which were in no other danger of remaining poor, except that which arose from want of hands to become rich; and in which the emigrants, by helping their new country, would be laying the foundation of their own fortunes.

In other measures, both of foreign and domestic policy, the Government acted with vigour and prudence. There were troubles both in the west and east of Europe: in Portugal, Don Pedro, having fixed his residence in Brazil, had abdicated his European crown in favour of his daughter, Donna Maria, a child only nine years of age; but Don Miguel, his brother, who had been appointed regent of the kingdom under this new arrange-

ment, which he had taken an oath to respect, when at the beginning of this year he returned to the country from which he had previously been absent, violated his agreement, and having a strong party in the country, was making strenuous endeavours to dethrone his niece, and to obtain the sovereign power in her stead. As soon as his intentions were developed, the British ambassador, Sir Frederick Lamb,* took upon himself to detain the troops which had been sent to Lisbon by Canning two years before, and which were just on the point of re-embarking for England; and at the same time he sent back a large sum of money which had been procured in London as a loan to the Portuguese Government. The troops the ministers at home persevered in recalling; rightly thinking it wholly inconsistent with our principles to keep an armed force in any country with a view of supporting any particular form of government; but the moment that Don Miguel prevailed on the estates of the nation to declare him king, they withdrew their ambassador, and, on the matter being brought before the Peers by Lord Holland, the Duke defended the conduct of the Government in an able and candid speech; admitting the embarrassment in which it was placed by the events which had occurred subsequently to our recognition of the sovereignty of Donna Maria, whose right, arising from the abdication of her father, was incontestable; since we were unable to view the conduct of her uncle without feeling the strongest disapprobation of his treachery; as we had abundantly shown by our prompt recall of our ambassador; while at the same time "we had clearly no right to interfere in "the internal affairs of Portugal." He reminded the House that in previous years we had several times

* A younger brother of Lord Melbourne, afterwards Lord Beauvale.

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" refused to guarantee the Portuguese constitution, to " interfere with the relations between the sovereign and " the subject, or indeed to have anything to do with the " internal concerns of the kingdom: and now, when " parties there were greatly divided, it was our part as a " wise government, wishing to preserve our alliance with " that country, to wait and see the result of the con- " test," without complicating it further by any active intervention on our part.

In Turkey affairs wore a still more perplexing aspect. The Sultan, not very unnaturally exasperated at the destruction of his fleet at Navarino, had been provoked by it to treat the Christians throughout his dominions with greater severity than ever, and made open preparations for formal hostilities, in which Russia anticipated him by declaring war against the Porte in the spring of this year. This again was made by the Opposition in Parliament a ground for an attack upon the ministers, who were accused of sympathizing with Russia in a desire for the dismemberment of Turkey; but on this point also Wellington made a successful defence, showing that, while by the observance of a prudent neutrality he had avoided involving this country in war, such a neutrality afforded the best chance of bringing about a restoration of peace (which as it had been our original object to maintain, it was now our most sincere and eager wish to re-establish), by enabling us to offer our mediation between the belligerents, which there was still reason to hope would be accepted by both parties.

At home the measures for the final establishment of the currency on a solid and secure footing, which had been commenced under previous Administrations, were finally completed by a bill prohibiting the introduction

of Scotch one-pound notes into England, which in the Upper House was moved by the Duke himself, in a speech that displayed a thorough acquaintance with the whole history of the currency question, and an equally correct appreciation of the soundest principles of financial policy.

But the changes consequent on the retirement of Huskisson and his followers produced one immediate consequence of the greatest moment, being no less than the abolition of the disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics. Before the debate which led to Huskisson's retirement, a resolution had been passed by the House of Commons affirming the expediency of taking those disabilities into consideration, with "a view to a final and "conciliatory adjustment" of the question; by which, of course, their entire abolition was intended by all who supported it: and early in June Lord Lansdowne had moved a similar resolution in the House of Lords. The proposition was vigorously discussed on both sides: the champions of each appealed to Mr. Pitt's authority, some declaring that that great Minister had pronounced in favour of the sufficiency of the securities which the Roman Catholics were willing to give for the innocence of their intentions with respect to the Established Church; while others affirmed that he had been far from expressing or entertaining any such opinion. Lord Wellesley, whose intimate acquaintance with Ireland (which he had lately been governing with eminent success), naturally gave his judgment great weight in a matter which had such a peculiar reference to that island, spoke warmly in favour of Lord Lansdowne's resolution, affirming that the laws which imposed the existing disabilities on the Roman Catholics had themselves a tendency to endanger rather than to protect

the Established Church: and the Duke replied to his brother's speech at considerable length; opposing the resolution, but at the same time expressing his earnest desire to see the question brought to an amicable conclusion. He said that he had never imagined that the maintenance of the disabilities in question could be defended on the score of any objection which might be entertained to any of the religious tenets proposed by the Roman Catholics: but that he considered to be wholly a "question of expediency." He "grounded his "opposition to the motion before the House on the "Church Government of the Roman Catholics," and he despaired of finding a remedy for the evils engendered by the system of combination on which the Roman Catholic Church had long been accustomed to act, "unless a means could be found for connecting the Roman "Catholic Church with the Government of the country." He referred to the appeals that had been made to Pitt's authority, and declared that after "having conversed "with many persons who had been intimately acquainted "with him, he had never yet been able to learn what "securities they were which he had in contemplation;" while he affirmed at the same time as a fact that even Lord Lansdowne could not deny, "that the Roman Catholics themselves had objected to all securities," instead of having proclaimed their willingness, as had been asserted in the course of the debate, to give such security as the greatest champions of Protestant ascendency had acknowledged to be sufficient. He looked upon Catholic emancipation as an experiment, the more perilous that, as he feared, "the Roman Catholic religion in its natural "state was not very favourable to civil liberty in any "part of Europe." And he illustrated and corroborated this opinion by a reference to the Concordats which

different Roman Catholic sovereigns on the Continent had found it necessary to exact from the Pope, "by "which they had each acquired that power which is "necessary for the Civil Government to have over the "clergy of the country." He pointed out good reasons, based principally on the position of the Sovereign of Great Britain as head of the Established Church throughout all his dominions, why such an agreement was not applicable to the state of affairs in the nation; while yet, in his judgment, "some arrangement to secure "the influence of the Government over the conduct of "the Roman Catholic clergy, and its control over their "communications with Rome would be necessary," before political power should be put into the hands of the Irish Roman Catholics. He repeated his desire to see the question adjusted; but he expressed his belief that the best chance of arriving at such an adjustment lay in the temporary abandonment of the discussions on the subject, which of late had been renewed in every session of Parliament; that so the public mind being allowed to rest, and the agitation on the subject, which only aggravated the difficulties of any settlement, having time to subside, the friends of tranquillity might have a chance, by giving a calm consideration to the whole question, of discovering the best means of surmounting its embarrassments.

It was not unnatural that a speech like this from the Prime Minister, so widely differing, not only in the tone of its opposition, but also in the principles on which it based that opposition, from those of Lord Eldon and the old champions of Protestant ascendency, should have given great encouragement to the friends of emancipation; and Lord Lansdowne, though aware that he should be defeated in the coming division, congratulated

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himself in his reply on the advantage which he had obtained from his motion in eliciting from the Duke a speech which gave such great indications that the day of concession was not far distant. No doubt Wellington saw through the speaker's intention, in some degree to bind him for a future occasion by now putting this interpretation on his words before his face, unless he at once disavowed it; but though he saw that he was carefully watched, he made no sign of dissent,* and the partisans of the Roman Catholics drew as much encouragement from his significant silence as they had before derived from his language.

The day for which they looked was nearer at hand than the most sanguine of them ventured as yet to expect. The Ministry had given a great indication of their belief in their own strength by abstaining from calling on Parliament to renew the Act for the suppression of unlawful societies in Ireland, which had been aimed more particularly at the Roman Catholic Association. It had been originally passed in 1825 for three years, and was now, therefore, on the point of expiring. Lord Anglesey, who had succeeded Lord Wellesley as Lord-Lieutenant, expressed a decided opinion that the chief effect of such a measure of coercion was to stimulate resistance, while the astuteness of the legal members of the Association would always be able to evade its provisions without risking their personal safety. He urged that it bore with it an appearance of persecution, which caused an union between the different parties of Roman Catholics in Ireland, and thus strengthened the Association, which, if it were not for that consideration, would be looked upon with great distrust by the Roman

* See Lord Lansdowne's conversation with Moore on the subject.—Moore's Life, v., 319.

Catholic prelates and the more respectable of the laity; and he therefore recommended that the existing law should be suffered to expire, hoping that the vigilance of the executive Government would suffice to preserve peace; and that, should his expectations on this head be unhappily disappointed, the display of the temperate disposition of the English Government would have so strengthened it on this point in Parliament that there would the next year be no difficulty in procuring the enactment of more effectual laws.*

The Cabinet, with reason and propriety, deferred to the views of the man who by his office was especially responsible for the tranquillity of Ireland; but their decision had scarcely been formed when a fresh complication of events arose which prevented their conciliatory policy from having a fair trial. The new President of the Board of Trade in the room of Mr. C. Grant, was Mr. Fitzgerald, the member for Clare; and when, having vacated his seat by the acceptance of office, he offered himself for re-election, the Association put forward its leader, O'Connell, as a second candidate, well knowing that, being a Roman Catholic, he could not take his seat should he be successful, but judging also that his success would give such additional strength to the cause of emancipation as to render it irresistible. In order to mark the nature of the contest the more unmistakeably, O'Connell made a formal declaration before the sheriff that he was and intended to continue a Roman Catholic. The issue of the election was not doubtful for a moment. After a fortnight of commotion and disturbance unusual even in Ireland, the influence of the Roman Catholic priests prevailed over that of the landlords, who to a

* See letter and memoranda from Lord Anglesey and Mr. Lamb, the Secretary for Ireland (since Lord Melbourne), in Peel's Memoirs, i., 23—44.

man supported Fitzgerald, and O'Connell was returned by a great majority. Though he had pledged his reputation as a lawyer, backing his assertion by a written opinion, which he had procured from an English barrister, that he should be able to take his seat if elected, he made no attempt to do so during the current session. But in spite of this shrinking on his part, it was clear that the Association had gained a triumph, the importance of which could not be exaggerated. Its leaders openly announced that all the other counties in the south and west of Ireland would at the next election follow the example which had been set by Clare, and that at least seventy Roman Catholics would be returned by Irish constituencies.

O'Connell's assertion that there was no law to prevent him from taking his seat if elected, was a singular proof of the extent to which he presumed on the ignorance and credulity of the lower classes of his countrymen, among whom alone, with the exception of the priesthood, whose tool he was, he enjoyed any popularity. If the state of the law was such as he pledged himself to prove it in his own case, it was plain that the Roman Catholics had nothing to complain of; that they had no need to be emancipated, for that in fact there were no restrictions fettering their complete political liberty in existence; but they overlooked this consideration, and while they implicitly believed his word, which assured them that there was no need of their exertions to remove fetters which hindered them from nothing, they did not worship him the less for heaping all kinds of abuse on the forgers and maintainers of those fetters, and for calling on themselves for those exertions to remove them.

CHAPTER XLII.

The Duke of Clarence is removed from his office of Lord High Admiral—Difficulties of the Catholic Question—Recall of Lord Anglesey—Letter of the Duke to Dr. Curtis—The King's repugnance to Emancipation.

IT was not strange that so striking an event as O'Connell's election should force the most reluctant ministers to reconsider the Catholic question. Parliament was prorogued at the end of July, and they were at once beginning to apply themselves to the task before them, which was not rendered easier by Peel's desire to abandon his place in the Cabinet, when their attention was very disagreeably called off, and the Duke's force of will and determination required in a case where its exertion was, as he knew, opposed to the personal wishes of his Sovereign. Canning had restored the office of Lord High Admiral, in order to place the Duke of Clarence in that dignified office, thus gratifying the private feelings of the King, who thought it very becoming to have one of his royal brothers at the head of the navy, as he had so long had another at the head of the army. And his royal highness had continued in that post under Lord Goderich, and, though a decided favourer of Whig politics, had hitherto retained it under the Duke of Wellington also. But Canning had omitted to take any proper measures for regulating the discharge of the duties of the office under this new arrangement, and the

Duke of Clarence was of a disposition which greatly needed control. Though quite free from any unbecoming pride of station in his general demeanour, and though fond and proud of his profession, he had at all times betrayed a feeling that his royal blood emancipated him from the restraints of its discipline; and when in early youth, on his arriving at the rank of post-captain, he had obtained the command of a ship, he played such freaks, and behaved with such complete insubordination, that the Admiralty of the day, feeling the impossibility of adequately punishing a son of their King, were compelled to refuse him all employment for the future.

Age had not modified his wilfulness on this point. The battle of Navarino had raised his spirits to an extravagant degree of elation; he seemed to look on it as reflecting some amount of credit on himself, as having occurred under his rule; and without in the least consulting the Ministers, he lavished promotions on the officers engaged with an indiscriminate prodigality wholly at variance with the guarded language in which the ministers were bound to speak of that event. It was evidently impossible to leave such a power in his hands without control; and accordingly, as soon as Wellington's Administration entered upon office, they brought in a bill to regulate the performance of the Lord High Admiral's duties; providing him with a council to assist him in the discharge of them; binding him to consult them on all matters, and generally not to act without their concurrence and sanction; and they placed at the head of this council a most distinguished officer, Sir George Cockburn, one of Nelson's captains, whose ship had, on a well-known occasion, borne the flag of that greatest of all sailors. But the Lord High Admiral had no idea of being held in trammels by his council, and having taken

a particular dislike to Cockburn, made almost a parade of throwing their advice overboard, acting on all occasions without consulting them, defying their well-known opinions, and treating Cockburn himself with positive rudeness. That officer reported the state of affairs to Wellington, who wrote a strong letter of remonstrance to the Duke of Clarence, and at the same time laid the matter before the King so plainly that George IV. agreed that his brother must obey the law or resign his office. The Duke of Clarence would do neither, but insisted on the dismissal of Cockburn: but Wellington, though treating him, as well as his Majesty, with the most profound respect, stated firmly to the King that it was out of the question to remove an officer merely for remonstrating against breaches of the law which his superiors had committed.

It remained for the Duke of Clarence to resign, and he did so; but after the preceding statement of his wrong-headed behaviour, it must be mentioned to his honour, that neither at the moment of his loss of an office which he greatly valued, nor at any subsequent period, did he manifest the slightest ill-will towards the Duke as having been the cause of his removal; but having proclaimed on this occasion that though there might be differences between the Prime Minister and the Lord High Admiral, there could be none between the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Wellington, he acted steadily in the spirit of this declaration to the end of his life, and, even when raised by his brother's death to a loftier dignity, ever looked on Wellington, not only as the most loyal supporter of the monarchy, but as the truest friend of the monarch. On the Duke of Clarence's resignation, Lord Melville was removed from the Board of Control to the Admiralty, and Lord Ellenborough was placed at

the head of the Board of Control, holding the Privy Seal with it for a time, since Wellington, apprehending that the line of conduct which he should be compelled to adopt towards the Roman Catholics might probably lead to further changes in his Cabinet, preferred keeping that office at his disposal for a while, with a view to facilitate his subsequent arrangements.

The task before him was one of almost inconceivable difficulty. His opinions of the danger of making any change in the law, and of the general hostility of the Roman Catholic principles to civil liberty, were probably very little altered; but against this danger he had now to set the still greater peril, if not the absolute impossibility, of leaving the question any longer in its existing unsettled condition. Without reference to the reasonableness of the claim put forward by the Roman Catholics, now greatly strengthened by the recent concession of those advanced by the Protestant dissenters, there had long been reasons sufficient to make every statesman concerned in the Government anxious for its settlement, in the division of opinion on the subject which had for many years existed between the two Houses of Parliament; and in the embarrassment which it had caused to every administration, complicating, as it did, almost every question of domestic policy which demanded their attention. Since the formation of Lord Liverpool's ministry, the feeling in favour of concession had evidently gained ground in England, where there had been many converts to it and no deserters from it: and now the decisive step taken by an Irish constituency, which there could be no doubt would be extensively followed on the first opportunity, appeared to render it impossible with safety to the peace of the kingdom to avoid settling the question before the next general election.

A few years after this period, Wellington, explaining the motives which influenced his conduct on another question of great importance, avowed as his rule that "though, if the world were governed solely by principle, "nothing would be easier than to conduct the greater "and possible affairs; since that is not the case, in all "such matters the choice of a wise man is confined to "the selection of the least of contending difficulties." * And acting now on this rule, which must surely be allowed to be the only one that can commend itself to the wisdom of a practical statesman, the moment that Parliament was prorogued in 1828 he began to apply his thoughts resolutely to the consideration of the Roman Catholic question: in a very few days he made up his mind to endeavour to settle it by the abolition of the existing restrictions; and the first week in August had hardly expired when he laid before the King an elaborate memorial on the state of Ireland, with reference to which part of the kingdom he always considered the question must be principally and almost solely argued; and he communicated it at the same time to Peel, to whom alone of his colleagues, with the exception of the Lord Chancellor, he as yet revealed his opinions and intentions.

Peel was as thoroughly convinced as he himself was that the Clare election had rendered it impracticable any longer to maintain the exclusion of the Roman Catholics from Parliament. Nevertheless, feeling strongly the difficulties in which the high ground which he himself had at all times taken in resisting their claims had placed him if he should now, while still retaining office, become the advocate of the concessions which hitherto he had uniformly opposed, he was exceedingly desirous to

* See his speech on the Church Temporalities Bill (Ireland), July 19, 1833.

relinquish his post as Secretary of State, that no one might have room to say that he had sacrificed his opinions to a wish to retain his ministerial position; and he pressed the acceptance of his resignation on Wellington, promising to support the intended concessions with all his energy as a private individual, and urging that his advocacy, then manifestly disinterested, would be of more value and service than when it might bear to prejudiced eyes the appearance of being purchased by the allurements of office. Further reflection rather increased his desire to retire from the Administration, though he eventually yielded it to the Duke's representation of the great additional difficulties which his resignation would interpose to the successful carrying of the measure.

From his other colleagues the Duke anticipated no opposition; and from one of great importance, Lord Anglesey, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, who had no suspicion of his intentions, he was continually receiving most earnest exhortations not to delay emancipation; assurances that unless it were granted, he himself should not longer be able to maintain tranquillity as governor of the country; and, moreover, that the disposition of the Irish Roman Catholics appeared so favourable at the moment that, if such measures were coupled with concession, they would not be inclined to raise difficulties either at the suppression of the forty-shilling freeholders, or even at connecting their clergy with the State by consenting to arrangements for the payment of their stipends from the British treasury.

The difficulties which Wellington foresaw were rather from the King, and from the authorities of the Established Church. Four years before, George IV. had

recorded in a written paper his resolution to adhere to the sentiments "of his revered and excellent father "upon Catholic emancipation; from which," he declared, "he never could, and never would deviate." Canning himself, though he had procured his consent to a bill which he was contemplating to authorize official communications with the Pope, had been forced to purchase that concession by a promise not to bring forward any measure for the removal of the disabilities during his Majesty's life. And the most influential of the English bishops had committed themselves with almost equal positiveness to the same view of the subject, in which it was to be expected that both sovereign and prelates would be mutually strengthened by their agreement. It was evident that it was only by the most dexterous management that such embarrassments could be overcome. While, to show the perverseness of fortune, it so happened that those most interested in smoothing them greatly increased them by their imprudence. Lord Anglesey, though governing Ireland in many respects with energy and sagacity, and showing the most fearless resolution not to shrink even from the most warlike measures to repress the Roman Catholic Association, and also the Brunswick Clubs, which had been formed to resist the designs of that formidable and dangerous body,—was yet too much disposed to indulge and caress individuals, however deeply implicated in the proceedings of such bodies; and declined, though strongly urged by the Duke, to remove some of the most hot-headed agitators from the commission of the peace. He admitted that they had used language which was little short of treason; that some of them had even addressed such language to the troops when called out in discharge of their duty; and that those who had done

so "were not fit characters for the magisterial bench;" but still he maintained that their conduct, inasmuch as it had fallen short of a legal offence, would not justify their removal from it. He went further: he paid a formal visit to Lord Cloncurry, the only Irish nobleman who had joined the Association, and whose loyalty had at all times been under suspicion, so much so, indeed, that in former days he had been twice arrested on charges of treason. Wellington, with the unanimous approval of his colleagues, determined on removing Lord Anglesey from his Government; and if such a step had required any additional justification, it was afforded by the Marquess himself, who, before the letter of recall reached him, had written to Dr. Curtis, the Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland, expressing his own disapproval of the Duke's advice to the Roman Catholics to cease from forcing on discussions on the question of emancipation; and counselling them rather "not to lose sight of the question for a moment, but to "disarm the opposers of emancipation by their own "unwearied perseverance." And not content with writing such a letter, he actually sanctioned its publication in the public newspapers.

Considering that, by the consent of all parties, a great portion of the miseries under which Ireland was labouring was traceable to the violence of the agitation which had been excited, it is hardly too much to say that so improper a letter was never written by a magistrate in high authority. But if it was possible to surpass the impropriety of Lord Anglesey's conduct, it was done by Dr. Curtis, who aggravated his indiscretion by a most discreditable breach of confidence. In the discharge of his professional duties he had been a resident at Salamanca when the Duke was warring in Spain;

and communications had naturally taken place between them at that time, which had led to a certain degree of intimacy. Availing himself of this circumstance, he, in the early part of December of this year, wrote a letter to Wellington, to urge a settlement of the Catholic question, in which he expressed his belief that the Duke himself was sincerely anxious for so desirable a consummation. Wellington, fancying that he was dealing with a friend and a man of honour, answered him with perfect frankness, assuring Dr. Curtis that he did him justice in the belief which he had expressed of his private wishes; but declaring at the same time that he "saw no "prospect of a settlement; for that party had been "mixed up with the consideration of the question to "such a degree, and such violence pervaded every dis- "cussion of it, that it was impossible to prevail on men "to consider it dispassionately. If," he however added, "we could bury it in oblivion for a short time, and "employ that time diligently in the consideration of its "difficulties on all sides (for they are very great), I "should not despair of seeing a satisfactory result."

This letter, written in the confidence of private friendship, Dr. Curtis at once carried in triumph to the Association, and then communicated it to Lord Anglesey, and published it in the Irish papers; by such proceedings not only displaying his own want of good faith, but also a complete disregard of Wellington's wishes and advice, and doing his utmost to disconcert his statesmanlike hopes and designs by such a premature disclosure of them.

For when the Duke said that he saw no present prospect of a settlement of the question, he was not in the least exaggerating his real opinion of the existing state of affairs. He had, as has been already mentioned, set

his own views, enforced by Peel's assent to them, before the King early in August; and he had had repeated interviews on the subject with him since that time; but as yet he appeared only to have irritated instead of convincing his Majesty; and as the royal reluctance to sanction any concession seemed to be rather hardened by discussion, Wellington began to apprehend that he should be compelled for the present to abandon his design.* As the time for the meeting of Parliament approached, before which it would be necessary to obtain the King's final determination, the Duke endeavoured to strengthen the formal appeal which he was preparing to make to his Majesty on the subject, by procuring the consent of the English bishops; but in two interviews which, with this object, he had with the Primate and one or two others among the most eminent and able members of the Episcopal bench, he wholly failed to remove their objections to the measure which he had in contemplation. It remained, therefore, to press the question on the King without any such assistance as might have been derived from the approval of any party besides the ministers themselves; and accordingly, in the middle of January, 1829, the Duke, in his character of Prime Minister, addressed to his Majesty a formal request to allow him to recommend to Parliament a settlement of the Roman Catholic claims; laying before him at the same time a memorial most ably drawn up by Peel, which very fairly set forth the recent history of the question, and the difficulties, amounting almost to impossibility, of leaving it any longer unsettled. Shaken, but not yet convinced, George IV. sent separately for each member of the Cabinet who had hitherto opposed concession, and then finding that they

* See Peel's Memoirs, i., 276—281, and 297.

were all convinced that the time for a prolonged resistance was passed, he gave a modified consent to the Duke's proposition, permitting the ministers to take the whole state of Ireland into consideration; but still refusing to pledge himself to allow them to carry out the plans which that consideration might lead them to recommend.

In their opinion, however, such a consideration of the state of Ireland was equivalent to an adoption of Roman Catholic emancipation, and accordingly they at once applied themselves to the preparation of a Bill having this object. When, in August, the Duke first communicated with Peel on the subject, he drew up also a paper containing the heads of the measure which he had in contemplation; and though that paper is not as yet to be given to the world, yet, as Peel himself has remarked in his Memoirs, the general tenor of the suggestions which it contained may be inferred from the remarks on it which that minister sent him in reply.*

In Bills which had been formerly brought in by the advocates of the Roman Catholics, it had been proposed still to exclude them from a great variety of offices. But now the Duke, wisely feeling that, if the concession could be expected to produce the effect which he hoped from it, it must be complete, was inclined to be satisfied with their exclusion from the office of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, and also from that of Lord Chancellor, on account of the great amount of ecclesiastical patronage which belongs to the last-named functionary. Some again, including many of the warmest and ablest advocates of emancipation, had been willing, while admitting the Roman Catholics to Parliament, to restrict their power

* Peel's Memoirs, i., 189, and 303.

of voting on questions affecting the Established Church; and Peel, feeling apparently that such a restriction would be difficult to carry out in practice, proposed instead to limit the number of Roman Catholic members; justifying his suggestion somewhat oddly by the argument that such a limitation would only resemble that which already existed on the number of members to be returned by Ireland and Scotland. Wellington, however, had no difficulty in rejecting both the restriction and the limitation proposed; but his own first idea did not extend to a formal and perpetual removal of the disabilities by repealing or altering the oaths required of members of Parliament; but he rather proposed an annual suspension of the obligation to take such of those oaths as were offensive to the Roman Catholics, thinking, probably, that such a mode of relief would be less offensive to the opponents of the measure than one which bore the stamp of perpetuity on its face. To this idea, however, Peel reasonably objected that it would give to the Roman Catholic members a tenure of their seats not identical with the duration of Parliament; and it was finally settled that the intended emancipation should be effected by a repeal of the oath against transubstantiation, and a reconstruction of the oath of supremacy. The Roman Catholic was no longer expected to subscribe to anything at variance with his religious tenets, but he was still to abjure the doctrine that the Pope could excommunicate or depose princes, and to deny that he had or ought to have any temporal or civil authority in any part of the United Kingdom. He was also to be required to promise that he would never attempt to destroy the Protestant religion or Government.

A question arose also as to what alteration should be made in the Irish constituencies, and the Duke himself

would have desired to disfranchise all electors who paid less than five pounds yearly in rates. It was clearly desirable, now that Roman Catholics were to become eligible to be returned, to get rid of that lowest class of electors who, as had been seen at the Clare election, were under complete subjection to their priests; but it was soon seen that the sum proposed would be too high, and also that to make the qualification depend on the amount, not of rateable property, but of rates paid, would establish a criterion to which the variety of effect which it would have in different parts of the island was not the worst objection. It was decided, therefore, to be content with disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders, and in other respects to leave the qualifications of electors untouched; and it was also resolved to suppress the Roman Catholic Association, in order to secure them, as far as enactments could secure it, the power of exercising their electoral privileges without interference.

A more important question, however, was, whether the abolition of the existing restrictions should be accompanied by any other measures affecting the future relation of the Roman Catholic religion to the State. Pitt when first planning the Union had looked upon the removal of the Roman Catholic restrictions, and the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy by the State, as indispensable accompaniments of that great measure; and though he was compelled by the unconquerable scruples of George III. to relinquish them both, it had since his time been generally felt that the emancipation would only half effect its object of tranquillizing the Irish people if it were not combined with a provision for the priests. Wellington himself appears to have been of that opinion now, and proposed to connect such a provision with the removal of the disabilities; but on

this point also he yielded to the arguments brought forward by Peel, who urged various objections, such as, that the Roman Catholics could have no claim of right to such an endowment; that such a concession to them would excite the Dissenters to demand a similar concession; and, what no doubt weighed most strongly on the minds of both, that the endowment of a sect so much distrusted and disliked by the religious classes of the community as the Roman Catholics, would create so much excitement as to endanger the prospect of carrying the still more important measure of emancipation.

Accordingly, the measures which were ultimately resolved on were confined to the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association, the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, and the removal of the restrictions which had hitherto prevented Roman Catholics from sitting in Parliament.

CHAPTER XLIII.

The King's Speech—Suppression of the Roman Catholic Association—Continued scruples of the King—The Duke challenges Lord Winchilsea—The Emancipation Bill passes—Disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders.

PARLIAMENT met on the 5th of February, 1829, and, as was natural when a measure of such importance was about to be introduced, an intimation of the intentions of the Cabinet was given in the King's speech; which "lamented the existence in Ireland of an asso-"ciation dangerous to the public peace and incon-"sistent with the spirit of the Constitution, which kept "alive discord and ill-will among his Majesty's subjects, "and which must, if permitted to continue, effectually "obstruct every attempt permanently to improve the "condition of the country." The speech then, after expressing a confidence that Parliament would "commit "to his Majesty such powers as might enable him to "maintain his just authority," went on to "recommend "that when this essential object should have been ac-"complished, the Houses should take into their deliberate "consideration the whole condition of Ireland, and "review the laws which imposed civil disabilities on his "Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, considering whether "the removal of those disabilities could be effected

"consistently with the full and permanent security of "our establishments in Church and State, and with the "maintenance of the reformed religion established by "law, . . . which it was the duty and the determination "of his Majesty to preserve inviolate."

So admirable was the secrecy which had been preserved by the Government respecting their intentions, that it was only a day or two before this announcement that the slightest suspicion of them had got abroad; and this secrecy had been maintained by the Duke, not because he feared to encounter the opposition which he knew that he was arousing, but partly because he believed that any excitement, such as he foresaw would be kindled on the subject, would be prejudicial to a calm consideration of the real bearings of the question, and more prejudicial the longer it lasted; and partly, also, because till the very last moment he was uncertain what conduct the King might adopt, and whether he might not revoke the consent which he had only given with the greatest unwillingness. The result proved that he had judged rightly in every respect. Petitions with unusual numbers of signatures were forwarded to both Houses of Parliament, and to the King himself; and while the Bill was pending the whole kingdom was agitated in a manner of which there had been no example for years. Peel, who, being aware that he had been elected member for the University of Oxford under the idea that he was an unchangeable advocate of the restrictions on the Roman Catholics, thought himself bound in honour to resign his seat, at the same time offering himself for re-election, was beaten by a considerable majority, and had some difficulty in procuring any seat at all. The newspapers which opposed emancipation reviled its new advocates in the coarsest manner, nor did the speakers in Parliament,

and even in the House of Lords, abstain from mingling with bitter reproaches still more bitter insinuations; while even to the very last moment the King himself, as will be presently seen, sought anxiously for any pretext which might justify him in eluding or retracting the consent which he had given to the introduction of the bill.

Wellington, however, who felt strongly that the conduct which he was pursuing was indispensable to the safety of the empire, was not to be moved from his purpose by petitions or by reproaches; and the Government proceeded rapidly with the great preliminary measure of the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association. On the 19th of February the Duke himself moved the second reading of the Bill which had been framed with that object, and in less than a week afterwards he pressed its third reading. He admitted that the Association had not been originally illegal, but he maintained that it had been rendered so by the language and acts of its members; especially by its collection of money, and by its application of the sums collected partly "to election "purposes, and partly even to endeavouring to control "the administration of justice." Yet, so unsatisfactory was the state of the existing law that the legal advisers of the Crown, both in England and Ireland, had agreed in the preceding year that it was impossible to institute proceedings against either the Association or its individual members with any chance of success. "He would not," he said, "detain his hearers by dilating upon the effects "which the existence and operations of this Association "had had upon Ireland;" but he summed them up in a declaration that, "from all he had seen and read of "Ireland for the last two years, he did not believe that "there was on the face of the globe a country claiming "the character of civilization in so perilous a condition."

He argued, moreover, that since the Roman Catholics had never demanded the removal of their disabilities on the ground of abstract right, but had urged it solely as an act of political expediency, they had not been justified in establishing the Association to obtain that removal by intimidation and corruption. He maintained that to repeal those disabilities without first suppressing the Association was impossible; but at the same time he indignantly repudiated the charge which had been insinuated by Lord Eldon, that he had made a sort of bargain with its leaders, purchasing their consent to the suppression of the Association by a concession of the claims which it had been designed to support. He gave a brief sketch of the origin of the Association, and of the ineffectual attempts which from time to time had been made to check its operations; the want of success in which he attributed to the divisions existing in the Home Government on every question that arose with respect to Ireland; while those divisions again arose mainly from the state of the question of emancipation. The Bill which had been brought in was not a partial measure directed against the Roman Catholic Association alone; but it also gave the Lord-Lieutenant power to declare any association or assembly illegal, and to order the dispersion of any such body or meeting by the magistrates. Such power the Lord-Lieutenant would exercise at his discretion, and on his own responsibility; and the Duke entertained no fear that any one invested with that high office would shrink from the one or abuse the other. The Bill was passed with but very slight opposition, and then the ministers proceeded without delay to bring forward their more important measure.

It had nearly been arrested at the outset by a difficulty which was no longer foreseen. It was the 3rd of March

before Peel, having secured his election for the borough of Westbury, was able to resume his seat in Parliament; and he at once gave notice of his intention to bring in the Bill for the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities on the next day but one; but the following morning he, with the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst, were summoned to a conference with the King at Windsor, in the course of which they found, to their surprise, that he objected to any such alteration of the Oath of Supremacy as would satisfy the scruples of the Roman Catholics; and that, as he declared, he had hitherto misunderstood their intentions on this subject. Such a declaration placed the ministers in a painful situation, though the course incumbent on themselves was clear. It did not become them to enter into any contest with their Sovereign, with the view of shaking a determination which he affirmed to be the result of his deliberate and conscientious judgment. At the same time, by the language which they had recommended him to employ at the opening of Parliament, they had committed themselves if they remained in office to a line of policy inconsistent with that decision of their royal master. Accordingly, while they declared their intention to abandon the Bill in deference to his scruples, they at the same time tendered to him their resignation of the offices which they held, as what they could no longer retain with honour after the withdrawal of a measure which had not only been announced in the speech from the throne, but had, by the expectation of concession thus held out, tended in no small degree to procure the assent of Parliament to the suppression of the Roman Catholic Association. The King admitted that they had scarcely any other alternative, accepted their resignation, and began to turn his mind to the formation of a new Administration, which

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should share his feelings on the long-perplexed question in dispute.

Another Ministry had thus been broken up by it; but George IV. was an able and a sensible man; and a very few hours' reflection showed him the absolute impossibility, not only of forming a Government on the principle of the maintenance of the Roman Catholic disabilities which should give satisfaction to the nation, but of establishing any Administration at all on such a footing; since, with the single exception of Lord Eldon, there was not in either House of Parliament one statesman of any high reputation for ability who was not an advocate for the repeal of these restrictions. To think seriously of such a plan and to discover its total impracticability were the same thing; and accordingly, the very same evening, the King sent an express to the Duke, informing him that he saw no means of forming a new Government, that he must therefore request him and his colleagues to recall their resignations, and that he gave them permission to proceed with the Bill; and the next day he further authorized them to declare publicly that they had his entire sanction for so doing.*

The Bill thus introduced on the 5th of March into the House of Commons, passed speedily through all its stages there, and on the last day of the month the Duke laid it on the table of the House of Lords, and as soon as it had been read a first time, fixed its second reading for the next day but one. Many objections were advanced against such an unusual rapidity of proceeding. But the Duke replied that the question had already been continually discussed by the Peers ever since the meeting of Parliament, and that it was very desirable on every account that the agitation of it should be put an end to.

* Peel's Memoirs, i., 350.

It was quite true that the Bill had already undergone great discussion among the Peers, since its opponents, acting under a sincere though mistaken belief that it imperilled the maintenance of the Protestant establishment, and also that its introduction at all by the present administration was a flagrant breach of political faith, were unable to restrain themselves from denouncing it on every occasion, and every motion for a return, every presentation of an address or petition was made a handle for pouring forth reproaches against the Minister, and melancholy forebodings of the effect of the measure which he had introduced. At the same time attacks of all kinds were made upon him out of doors, and these, to the astonishment of the whole kingdom, he took a most unexpected method of repressing by fighting a duel with Lord Winchilsea.

About a year before, a large party, alarmed at the foundation of the London University, on the principle of disconnecting religion from education, had proposed to establish a rival institution to train up the rising generation of the metropolis on Church principles. The sanction of George IV., and permission to entitle it King's College, was obtained, and the Duke, who, in his own terse way, declared his opinion that to give men education without religion could only tend to make them clever devils, entered warmly into the scheme, and took the chair at some of the earliest meetings of its supporters. Among these supporters Lord Winchilsea had held a prominent place, and he had enrolled his name in the list of vice-presidents of the college; but now, exasperated at what he considered the Duke's defection from the Protestant cause, he desired the secretary to withdraw his name, writing an angry letter, in which he stated that "he had from the first felt rather doubtful as

"to the sincerity of the motives which actuated some of "the prime movers in the undertaking;" sneered especially at the Duke, as "having been induced on this "occasion to assume a new character, and to step for- "ward as the public advocate of religion and morality," and declared that "late political events had convinced "him that the whole transaction was intended as a "blind to the Protestant and High Church party, that "the Noble Duke, who had for some time previous to "that period determined upon breaking in upon the Con- "stitution of 1688, might the more effectually, under "the cloak of some intended show of zeal for the Pro- "testant religion, carry on his insidious designs for the "infringement of our liberties, and the introduction of "Popery into every department of the State."

He also sent a copy of this letter to some of the newspapers; and it certainly cannot be thought strange that the Duke felt highly offended at having such premeditated hypocrisy imputed to him as that which it described, though strange enough that a feeling of that nature should have led such a man to adopt the line of conduct which he now pursued. He at once sent Sir Henry Hardinge to the Earl with a note, demanding reparation in somewhat peremptory terms. Lord Winchilsea called Lord Falmouth to his councils, and the result of their united deliberation was, that though he should profess a willingness to allow "that he had been mistaken in his "view of the Duke's conduct," he should exact as a preliminary condition of such an admission an avowal from the Duke that when he presided at the meeting for the establishment of King's College, "he did not contem- "plate the measures now in progress for Roman Catholic "emancipation." The Duke fairly enough refused "to "admit that any man had a right to call him before him

"to justify himself from any charges which his fancy "might suggest," and repeated his demand for "repa- "ration." In fact, he desired to fight, and declared that the question was simply, "whether a gentleman, who "happened to be the King's minister, was to submit to "be insulted by any gentleman who should think proper "to attribute to him disgraceful or criminal motives for "his conduct as an individual;" and he wrote directly to Lord Winchilsea, calling upon him for that "satis- "faction which a gentleman had a right to require, and "which a gentleman never refused to give." Accordingly, on the 21st of March, Lord Winchilsea met him in Battersea fields, and after he had received the Duke's fire, Lord Falmouth delivered to Sir Henry Hardinge a paper containing an apology, which that officer admitted to be sufficient.

The news of this duel created one almost universal feeling of sorrowful amazement. A few wags, indeed, amused themselves with jests on the Duke's imperturbable calmness when, on being awakened by his second in the middle of the night, to tell him he was to fight at eight o'clock, he merely gave orders to be called in time, and turned round and went to sleep again: and on the fact, that when preparation for the duel was being made, it was found that he, the greatest warrior in the world, and an Irishman too, did not possess a pair of pistols. But thinking men grieved that a man of such a character as the Duke should have lent the sanction of his great name to a barbarous and already almost obsolete practice;* and even those who took lower ground

* Several years before, Lord Westmoreland had told Mr. Rush, the American minister, that duelling had gone much out of fashion, that a man who had fought one duel was looked on with suspicion, and that he who had fought two would be black-balled at any club in London.—Rush's 'Court of St. James.'

marvelled that the conqueror of Napoleon, of all men in the world, should think it necessary thus to vindicate his character for personal courage. He himself was aware of the general disapprobation with which his challenge to Lord Winchilsea was regarded, but justified it to one of his friends in a very strange manner;* declaring "that it was as much a part of the Roman "Catholic question, and that it was as necessary to "undertake it and carry it out to the extremity to "which he did carry it, as anything else which he "did to attain the object which he had in view. He "had been living," he complained, "in an atmosphere "of calumny." His speeches in Parliament, his conversations with his friends and with the King were all misrepresented "for the purpose of shaking the credit which "Parliament was inclined to give to his arguments." The courts of law were shut, so that no proceedings could be taken in them, while the instant success of the Bill was indispensable. "In this state of things," he said, "Lord Winchilsea published his furious letter, and "he himself immediately perceived the advantage which "it gave him, and determined to act upon it in such a "tone as would certainly put him in the right;" and he maintained that the line of conduct which he had adopted had been fully successful in putting an end to the calumnies with which he had been previously assailed, in making men ashamed to believe them, and in some instances in causing the abandonment of "in-"tentions not short of criminal. He was certain," he affirmed, "that the public interests at the moment had "required that he should do what he did."

There is no good man who has not at times committed

* See his letter on this subject to the Duke of Buckingham.—Buckingham's 'Memoirs of George IV.,' ii., 397.

grave faults, and no wise man who has not at times said silly things; but certainly a blamable action was never defended by weaker arguments than those thus brought forward by this most virtuous citizen and sagacious counsellor. It is strange too to find one who a few years* afterwards declared that throughout his Peninsular campaigns he had been attacked unsparingly without ever suffering the reproaches and calumnies levelled at him to influence his conduct, but that then, and at all times, he had steadily held on his course through good report and evil report, now so sensitive to misrepresentation which on all other occasions he disregarded with so lofty a contempt. But the truth probably is that he was at this time rendered unusually irritable by a secret uneasiness and misgiving as to the effect of the measure which he was urging. As we have already seen, he did not regard the concession of the claims of the Roman Catholics as an admission of a demand which they had a right to make, but as an act of political expediency, rendered such only by the still greater inexpediency of leaving things as they were;† and even while pressing it forward in the hope of tranquillizing Ireland, he did not conceal from his friends his doubts whether it would be found effectual for that purpose. Had he taken a higher and juster view of the subject, reflecting that, consistently with our Protestant doctrine of the right of private judgment, we cannot deny that there is a possibility, a bare possibility indeed it may truly be said, that the Dissenters from the Established Church, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, may be as right as its

* Vide infra, p. 473.

† He said to Lord Sidmouth, "It is a bad business, but we are aground." "Does your Grace then think," said Lord Sidmouth, "that this concession "will tranquillize Ireland?" "I can't tell. I hope it will."—'Life of Lord Sidmouth,' iii., 425.

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adherents; that, since such is the case, all Christians have clearly a right to an equality of civil privileges, unless political dangers of paramount importance interfere; that the Roman Catholics had originally been deprived of such privileges from well-founded considerations of political danger, but that all such danger had passed away with the life of the last of the Stuarts; and, in accordance with such reflections, resolving to grant the Roman Catholic civil equality as a right of which there no longer existed any pretence to deprive them, he would have contemplated the work which he had in hand with greater contentment, consoling himself for the possibility of its failure by his conviction of its inherent propriety and justice.

But whatever may have been his misgivings as to the ultimate effect of the measure, he had no doubt whatever that it was the only chance of preserving peace in Ireland that remained; and therefore there was no faltering in the energy with which he pressed forward the consummation of the measure. On the 2nd of April he moved the second reading of the Bill, carried it on the 4th; on the 7th, 8th, and 9th, having in the interim also carried the second reading of the Bill for the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders, he conducted it successfully through the Committee, and on the 10th he also carried the third reading by a majority of more than a hundred votes.

The speech with which he recommended the second reading to his brother Peers was the longest which at that time he had ever addressed to them, and it displayed his powers as an arguer on practical grounds in a very favourable light. Canning in former days had been eloquent on the position of the Duke of Norfolk; one day heading the Peers of England at the coronation of his sovereign, the next day not allowed any place at all

among them in their deliberations on the welfare of the State; and Sidney Smith had been sarcastic on the absurdity of those who, regulating the election of a mayor for a country town, refused to believe any one "qualified to discharge the solemn impertinencies of "that office" unless he agreed with them in condemning "the Catholic nonsense of the real presence." But Wellington rested his case now solely on the condition of Ireland, disdaining to urge upon his hearers any considerations, however specious or forcible, except those which had really influenced his own conduct. He declared that recent events in that country proved that there was "an organization for the purposes of mischief" among the Roman Catholics there, which had not been witnessed before, which greatly "aggravated all "the evils which had previously afflicted that unhappy "land," and which even had a most injurious and degrading effect on the King's prerogative; such a state of things, "bordering upon civil war, and attended by "nearly all the evils of civil war," could not reasonably be expected to be terminated by any law of coercion which should not be accompanied with measures of conciliation; not that he doubted that if, as some wished, "recourse should be had to blows," an open struggle against the Government could end in any way but one; but he conceived that the leaders of the disaffected party were too wary even to commit themselves and their followers to any open resistance, but that they would find means to keep up the organization which was so dangerous, without even giving the Government an opportunity of putting it down by force. Supposing, however, that he should be mistaken; supposing that they should forget their prudence, and allow themselves to be seduced or driven into any open outbreak, which

would afford a ground for the employment of force against them; should such a calamity ensue, and should the Government be certain of means of putting down such an outbreak, "he should still consider it his duty "to avoid as far as possible every occasion for the "employment of those means. If," proceeded the intrepid and renowned soldier, "I am one of those who "have probably passed a longer period of my life in "war than most men, and principally in civil war—and "I must say this, that if I could avoid, by any sacrifice "whatever, even one month of civil war in the country "to which I was attached, I would sacrifice my life in "order to do it. I say that there is nothing which "destroys property, cuts up prosperity by the roots, and "demoralizes character to the degree that civil war "does. In such a crisis the hand of every man is raised "against his neighbour, against his brother, and against "his father: servant betrays master, and the whole "scene ends in confusion and devastation. Yet, my "Lords, this is the resource to which we must have "looked; these are the means which we must have "applied in order to have put an end to this state of "things, if we had not chosen the alternative of bringing forward the measures for which I say I am responsible. But let us look a little further: if civil war is "so bad when it is occasioned by resistance to the "Government, if it is so bad in the case which I have "stated, and so much to be avoided, how much more is "it to be avoided when we are to arm the people in "order that we may conquer one part by exciting the "other part against them."

At the bare idea of such a struggle he pronounced that every man who heard him must shudder, and also that the sole sure means of averting such a struggle lay

in passing the present Bill, the carrying of which had, as he affirmed of his personal recollection, been one of the great objects which the Government had in view when they proposed the union between Great Britain and Ireland. Even before the union was accomplished, the chief Protestant nobles of Ireland had been almost unanimous in recommending this concession, and it was obvious to every one that it was not less desirable or necessary now.

He showed further, by reference to the records of Parliament, that when the existing disabilities were first imposed, it was not intended that they should be permanent; he contended, almost irresistibly, that their removal would especially benefit the Established Protestant Church in Ireland, by removing one great object which its adversaries had in attacking it, and by strengthening the Government to which that Church must in times of peril look as its most efficient protector. And then passing on to the provisions of the Bill which he was introducing, and granting that "it went "further than any former measure," he defended its unprecedented liberality by an argument drawn from his own experience, that "any restriction upon con- "cession had only had the effect of increasing the "demands of the Roman Catholics, and at the same "time of giving them fresh power to enforce those "demands." And on this account he avowed that he had made the concession which he proposed "as large as "any reasonable man could expect it to be."

With respect to the danger to the Church of England, which some persons apprehended from the presence of Roman Catholics in Parliament, he reminded the Lords that the safety of the Church had never been the object either of the original imposition or of the subsequent

maintenance of the existing disabilities. On the contrary, it was from the Protestant dissenters that danger to the Church had been apprehended; and it was the State and the civil liberties of the nation which were, and at the time truly, supposed to be in peril from the designs of the Roman Catholics. But on the question of procuring "for the Established Church some security "against the proceedings of the Roman Catholic clergy," he admitted that he had changed his opinion, having been formerly favourable to the exaction of some security, but having since become convinced that, beyond the oath to be imposed by the Bill under discussion, no security was attainable. Sovereigns of Roman Catholic countries could enter into agreements with the Pope, because they admitted his power; but our Monarch could enter into no negotiation with him, and by any attempt to do so the Established Church would lose more than it could possibly gain. He was much more inclined to trust to a clause in the present Bill, which put an end to the order of Jesuits and to monastic establishments in the country.

Finally, he referred, as bearing a striking analogy to the present state of Ireland, to the condition of Scotland while somewhat similar disabilities pressed upon the Episcopalians in that kingdom, and to the apprehensions which the Presbyterians entertained of the effect of removing those disabilities; they then addressed petitions to the Scottish Parliament, denouncing toleration to the Episcopal party as a step "which must unavoid-"ably shake the foundation of the existing happy consti-"tution; overthrow the laws on which it was settled; "confirm discord and tumult, increase animosity, weaken "the Church, and propagate and encourage disaffection "to the Government." No one could deny that all

those predictions had been completely falsified; on the contrary, the moment that the disabilities were removed in Scotland, tranquillity was established in that country, and he hoped that similar prophecies respecting the present Bill would be proved by the result to be equally mistaken. "Should he be disappointed in the "hopes that he entertained that tranquillity would result "from this measure, he should have no scruple in again "calling on Parliament to enable the Government to "meet whatever danger might have arisen."

Statesmanlike as his speech had been, it could not be expected that so large and novel a measure could fail to meet a most vigorous resistance. The Archbishop of Canterbury, looking upon himself as called upon by his position to be the champion of the Church, moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months: and he was supported by earnest speeches from the aged Lord Eldon, and other honest and able advocates of the existing state of things. Some directed their arguments against the measure, others against the minister. Some denied the existence of danger to the kingdom, and dwelt on that which would arise from giving additional power to so ambitious and aggressive a Church as that of Rome; others argued that the secrecy which had been preserved respecting the measure till the opening of Parliament, showed that even its advocates disbelieved its propriety, and distrusted its effects. Some again attacked the minister, as influenced by motives of personal ambition; some for allowing himself to be made a tool by others more designing than himself. Some saw in his present conduct a proof of the correctness of his opinion when, two years before, he had said he should be mad to think of becoming Prime Minister; while others comforted themselves with the

prediction that the indignation of the country would soon drive him from office. Nor was the Bill even yet entirely free from the danger of being rejected by the King. George IV. had never, even when in early youth connected with the Whig party, been favourable to emancipation; his disinclination to consent to it had been strengthened probably by the influence of his brother, the Duke of York, who was always a most uncompromising opponent of the measure, and who had at all times great weight with him; and his disapprobation of it now appears to have been deeply rooted and sincere. While the Bill was in progress he had two long conferences on the subject with Lord Eldon, in which he complained bitterly of the pain he felt at the conduct of his ministers on the subject; declared that they had, as it were, presented a pistol to his breast, and almost compelled him to consent to the introduction of the Bill. Lord Eldon, though surpassed by no one in the gloomy view which he took of its probable effects, was too shrewd and also too honest a man to recommend his Majesty at so late a stage of the proceedings to withdraw the consent which he had once formally given; nor would he countenance the idea which the King appeared inclined to put forward, that the giving such a consent was any violation of the oath which the King had taken at the coronation.

In the agony of mind into which George III. had been thrown by the loss of his American colonies, he had contemplated abandoning the kingdom; and his son had more than once made himself and his friends merry with a description of the seriousness with which he entered into the details of the arrangements for his projected return to Hanover, not suspecting at the time that it was an indication of the unsettled and diseased state of mind

of which that monarch soon afterwards began to show such fatal symptoms. And now George IV., forgetting the way in which he had ridiculed the idea in his father, began to entertain, or at least to talk of, a similar design himself, and vehemently protested that should he be compelled to give his royal assent to the Bill, he would quit the kingdom for ever, go to the German baths or to Hanover, and let the friends of the Roman Catholics get a king to their mind in the Duke of Clarence.* Happily, he derived so much relief to his distress from this declaration that he had no occasion to put it in practice. The day after he held this conversation with Lord Eldon the Bill passed the House of Lords, and on the Monday following he gave his royal assent to it, and it became the law of the land. And almost at the same time the Bill for the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling freeholders was also carried by a very large majority. They were not real possessors of property, but merely holders of a fictitious qualification, created for the purpose of giving them votes; and being taken chiefly from the lowest classes of society, they were entirely under the domination of the Roman Catholic priests. "Perjury," as the Duke declared in moving the second reading of the Bill, "was committed at every stage of "the transaction," and not unfrequently fraud also, when the grants of the freeholds being hurriedly and incorrectly drawn enabled those who received them to retain them in defiance of the real owner. The case against them was so clear that the adversaries of the Bill could only muster seventeen votes in opposition to it, and its enactment completed the settlement of the question.

* Twiss's 'Life of Lord Eldon,' iii., 86.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Effect of Roman Catholic Emancipation—Its partial failure owing to the incompleteness of the measure—Affairs of Portugal—Affairs of Greece—Violence of the Tory opposition—Riots in the manufacturing districts—Libels on the Duke—Prosecution of the 'Morning Journal.'

ON reviewing the adoption of Roman Catholic emancipation and its results, it seems undeniable that the Duke was guilty of no exaggeration when he pronounced it indispensable to the peace of the United Kingdom, and almost equally clear that it was demanded alike by justice and by policy. All apprehensions of the accession of a Roman Catholic sovereign had long passed away; and it was impossible to maintain that the restrictions were justified by religious considerations, or that merely sectarian differences between professors of the same religion were a sufficient ground for depriving one-fourth of the population of the kingdom of the civil privileges to which they were entitled as natives and inhabitants of the country. At the same time, it is but too certain that the removal of these restrictions has not had all the effect which Wellington hoped that it might produce of tranquillizing Ireland. But the cause of this failure may probably be found in the incompleteness of the measure, which, as we have seen, included no provision for the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy.

That there would have been difficulties in the arrangement of such a measure is not to be denied; not so much from any scruples on the part of the Roman Catholics, for, as far back as 1802, the Irish Roman Catholic bishops had intimated their acquiescence in it to Mr. Pitt, through Lord Cornwallis, the Lord-Lieutenant;* but from the apparent impossibility, consistently with the British constitution, of the Sovereign doing anything which might seem to be the fruit of an arrangement with the Pope. Since, however, the Roman Catholic religion and its ecclesiastics were already acknowledged in several of our colonies and dependencies, there was no real difficulty of this kind which sagacity and resolution would not easily have surmounted. We have seen that the Duke originally contemplated a Bill for such a purpose as an accompaniment of the Emancipation Bill; and there can be no doubt that his real reason for abandoning it was a deference to Peel's fears that its unpopularity might endanger the other measure of more pressing importance. But in the first place, it seems probable that Peel greatly overrated the disapproval which such a measure would have encountered in the country. Four years before, a resolution sanctioning the payment of the Roman Catholic clergy had been passed in the House of Commons by a larger majority than had even at that time voted for emancipation;† and though it was abandoned in consequence of the Bill for the removal of the civil disabilities being thrown out by the Peers, there was no reason to anticipate that it would have met with a less favourable reception now, when it was made more necessary than ever by the

* See Letter to Sir R. Peel in 1845, by the Knight of Kerry.

† The resolution was moved by Lord Francis Egerton, and seconded by Colonel Pakenham, the Duke's brother-in-law; and the majority in its favour was 43.

parliamentary success of that other measure. But even had its unpopularity been greater than it was likely to be, it could hardly have added at the moment to the excitement produced by the removal of the disabilities. The nation has always been unreasonable on the subject of popery, and there can be no question that the relief now granted to the Roman Catholics was carried against the wishes and feelings of the majority of the English people by the firmness and address of the Duke, who, seeing clearly what was necessary for the peace of his fellow-countrymen, resolved to insure them that blessing in their own despite. Under the cloak of the Emancipation Bill, the endowment of the Roman Catholic clergy would probably have passed almost unnoticed, or at worst, it would only have been looked on as an equally objectionable accompaniment of that measure, it would have met with no fiercer or additional opposition, and would have been carried with the same facility.

Considering the destitute condition in which the appropriation of the Church revenues to the Protestant Establishment in Ireland has left the Roman Catholic clergy, and the general poverty of their congregations; considering, too, that those congregations are composed principally of the comparatively uneducated classes, and that, as long as the priests draw their income from them, they must conciliate them by humouring their most dangerous prejudices and habits, and often by pandering to their worst passions, it would seem, even apart from all considerations of justice, the best policy for the State at once to make them independent of their flocks, and to secure a hold over them for itself, by becoming their paymaster. And if this was generally acknowledged by the wisest statesmen in earlier times (for Pitt, as has been already mentioned, had intended to

combine emancipation and the endowment of the Irish Roman Catholic clergy with the Union), much more imperatively did statesmanlike policy demand such a step now, when, by the alteration in the law, which had enabled Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament, not only was the political influence of the priests increased in the greatest possible degree, but at the same time the motives to push that influence on all occasions to the greatest extent were inconceivably strengthened. It may also be added, that the boon of emancipation with which it would then have been combined, would have sweetened it to those classes of Roman Catholics who were unwilling, indeed, to see the priests of their persuasion paid by a Government which rejected their doctrines; but who would cheerfully have discarded such theoretical scruples in consideration of the solid advantage of an equality of civil rights.

Unfortunately, the favourable occasion was then suffered to slip; and, since it is as true in the case of nations as of individuals, that opportunities of doing well are rarely given twice, it may be long before the nation is reasonable enough, or the Government again strong enough, for such a measure to be proposed with any chance of success: yet it is one which is called for by every consideration of equity and policy, and which has been sanctioned by the favourable opinion of every statesman who has deserved the name since the enlightened wisdom of Pitt first conceived the idea of forming one united kingdom of fellow-countrymen, enjoying equal rights, out of two nations, which the indignant patriots of the weaker country had previously had too much reason to distinguish as the oppressors and the oppressed, the masters and the slaves. Still, imperfect as the measure thus adopted was, to carry it at all was a very great

achievement, placing in a very strong light the ascendency over the minds of his fellow-men, which Wellington at all times possessed, and eminently entitling him to the gratitude of both the countries whose union it was designed to consolidate. Nor was that gratitude withheld. There are now more statues of him than have ever been erected in honour of any other man, but at that time no moulded or sculptured effigy of his person had yet been raised to commemorate his military exploits, though the ladies of England had, indeed, in honour of Waterloo, adorned Hyde Park with a statue of Achilles, clad as when Thetis dipped him in the Styx, a somewhat odd memorial of a warrior who, amid his greatest perplexities and perils, had always found time to attend to the cleanness of his neckcloth and the cut of his Hessian boots. But now that honour, which his deeds of arms had not hitherto procured him, was granted at once to his peaceful triumphs, and the royal assent had scarcely been given to the Emancipation Bill, when a great meeting was held in London, including many of those usually opposed to his party and politics as a Tory, to raise subscriptions for a statue of him, to be erected in Dublin; and its promoters exulted, speaking by the mouth of the son of the greatest of Irish statesmen and patriots, the illustrious Grattan, that religious freedom had been won by the same great captain who had restored national independence to Europe, and had given security to this empire against foreign enemies.

And the same year, one of the bravest of those who had won laurels under his command, began to raise to his honour a monument more imperishable than marble or brass. Napier published the first volumes of his 'History of the Peninsular War,' a work which,

though occasionally disfigured by extreme political prejudice, and sometimes even more unjustifiably by bitter personal rancour, stands by unanimous confession at the head of all the military histories that have ever been penned; which, as accurate and generally as impartial as Polybius, often as spirited and eloquent as Cæsar or Livy, was the first work that gave the world any just idea of the real greatness of Wellington's military exploits, and of the multiform and unparalleled difficulties under which he had achieved them. With all his genius, Napier could not have produced so great a work had he not been aided by the Duke himself; and the motives which Wellington alleged for assisting him were thoroughly characteristic. Some years before, hearing that a well-known author of extreme Tory politics was proposing to write a history of the same war, and thinking that perhaps he should be applied to for materials, he told one of his most trusted friends* that "if any authenticated history of that war by an "author worthy of writing it were given, it ought to "convey to the public the real truth, and to show what "nations really did when they put themselves in the "situation in which the Spaniards and Portuguese had "placed themselves; and that he should give informa-"tion and materials to no one who would not write "on that principle. His object," he said, "was a true "history." He was well aware that in political views of domestic interest no one could differ more widely from himself than Napier; but he also knew the honest fearlessness of the man; and, as he told one of his friends, who remonstrated against his assisting "such "a radical," he felt sure "that he would tell the truth." With this feeling he cordially and frankly gave the

* Sidney's 'Life of Hill,' 328.

veteran historian all the information that he sought; and desiring that the truth should be told, even at his own expense, he did not withhold it when he found his actions subjected to the severest criticism, often even to wholly undeserved strictures and reprehension.

The great measure of domestic reform thus successfully carried, though the chief, was not the only object of importance that occupied Wellington's attention during this session of Parliament. The struggle in Portugal between the parties of Don Miguel and his niece was still going on; and though Don Miguel, being for the time in possession of uncontrolled authority, was conducting himself with the most revolting tyranny and inhumanity, it still appeared that the majority of the country was in his favour. Indeed, Donna Maria was scarcely recognized in any part of the Portuguese dominions, except in the islands of Madeira and Terceira. Miguel made a vigorous attempt to reduce Terceira, which wholly failed through the skill and resolution of the Marquis of Villa Flor, who held that island for the Queen; but it was probable that the attempt would be renewed, and a considerable number of her partisans who had taken refuge in England prepared an expedition to join the garrison of Terceira, in order to preserve that important post for her whom they acknowledged as their Sovereign.

There could be no doubt that British ministers could not permit an expedition of so hostile a character to be fitted out in our ports. We had not, it is true, acknowledged Don Miguel, but neither were we at war with him. Don Pedro, indeed, had claimed our intervention in favour of his daughter, invoking the treaties which subsisted between Great Britain and Portugal; but the ministers had replied, that they only bound us

to protect Portugal from foreign invasion or interference, and that they would in no degree justify our interposition to remedy or influence the consequences of an internal revolution. And, carrying out the principle thus laid down, they also gave notice to the band which was preparing to sail from these shores, that it would not be permitted to land at Terceira; and they sent a small squadron, under Captain Walpole, to the neighbourhood of that island, to enforce this prohibition. About Christmas, 1828, the Portuguese expedition, headed by the Count Saldanha, who had formerly been the War Minister at Lisbon, sailed in four armed vessels from Plymouth: it was given out that their destination was Brazil; but, as our Government had correctly judged, that announcement of their object was only meant as a blind, and in the middle of January they appeared off Terceira. So resolute were they in attempting to land, that Captain Walpole was compelled to use force to prevent them from doing so. Saldanha wished to represent his obedience to his mandates, when enforced by fire from the British ships, as a surrender to a hostile attack; but Walpole behaved with as much discretion as resolution, and gave him notice, that though he could not be permitted to land at Terceira, he was at liberty to direct his course to any other quarter which he might select; and accordingly, after a vain show of resistance and much angry remonstrance, Saldanha retired to Brest.

The conduct of the ministers was made the subject of a violent attack in the House of Lords by Lord Holland, who maintained that Donna Maria had a right to our active support; but the Duke's defence was easy and convincing. He showed that it never had been the practice of this country "to interfere with the internal

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"affairs of Portugal by arms;" that so recently as 1826, when Canning sent his celebrated expedition to Lisbon, this principle was asserted in the instructions given to the commander of that force "to abstain from "all interference in the internal affairs of the country;" and he argued that, "bound as we were in commercial "relations with Portugal, it was impossible for us to "suffer an army to be organized at Plymouth for the "purpose of invading any part of the Portuguese do- "minions. Nor had we any right to settle the question "whether Don Miguel was a usurper or not, by any "violation of the neutrality which it was our duty to "observe in the contest."

The affairs of Greece at the same time called for our more active interposition. There had been for some months war between Russia and Turkey, and though, for a while, the Turks made a more successful resistance than had been expected from them, the Russians ultimately obtained a decisive superiority, and after more than one victory, and the capture of several important towns and fortresses, pushed their advance so far towards the south as to menace Constantinople itself. To avert such a catastrophe, which would have been most prejudicial to the interests of the powers of Western Europe, the English and French ambassadors, who had previously quitted Constantinople, returned to that capital, and by their mediation peace was concluded at Adrianople between Russia and Turkey, by the terms of which Russia restored most of her conquests, but obtained valuable commercial and maritime privileges. The most important part of the negotiations, however, as far as our Government was concerned, related to Greece. In March our ministers, in conjunction with those of France and Russia, had signed a fresh agree-

ment, resolving to erect Greece into a kingdom, still owing a kind of feudal allegiance to the Porte, and bound to pay an annual tribute in acknowledgment of the Turkish superiority; and they had defined its boundaries by a line drawn from the Gulf of Volo, in the Ægean, to that of Arta, in the Ionian Sea. But in the autumn, when the Peace of Adrianople was signed, they modified their views so far as to resolve that Greece, as a monarchy, should be wholly independent, while, as some compensation to Turkey for the loss of the nominal superiority which it had at first been intended to preserve to her, and of the tribute which it had been promised to her, the territories of which the kingdom of Greece was to be composed were slightly narrowed. To this arrangement Turkey, however reluctant, was compelled to subscribe, and it only remained to select a sovereign for the new kingdom.

These transactions also became the subject of angry animadversions on the meeting of Parliament in 1830. But other matters of domestic, and as such of greater interest, also occupied the attention of the Legislature, and gave a pretext to the Opposition for vehement attacks upon the Prime Minister; and the Opposition was now a most formidable body. Wellington, at the time that he brought forward the Bill for the removal of the Roman Catholic disabilities, knew that he was shocking the prejudices, alarming the fears, and exciting the distrustful anger of many of his former friends and supporters; but he could never have anticipated what turned out to be the case, that in senseless and imbecile revenge they would unite with the Whig Opposition to drive him from office; though they knew that the Whigs were eager for the adoption of measures which they above all things dreaded; and that there was no

conceivable subject on which, for the future, any difference between the Duke and themselves could be expected to arise. But all considerations of practical wisdom were sacrificed to the insane idea of the justice of chastising the minister who had deceived the hopes which they had reposed in him; and, accordingly, Lord Eldon and Sir Edward Knatchbull combined with Lord Radnor and Mr. Hume in unceasing attacks upon every part of the ministerial policy. In execution of their sagacious design, circumstances rendered them some assistance. The past winter had been a season of severe distress in many parts of the kingdom, and distress, as is often the case, had proved the prolific parent of disturbance and crime. The manufacturing artisans ascribed their sufferings in a great degree to the introduction of looms worked by engines, which were of course more effective than hand-looms, and which, by augmenting the quantity of work that a single workman could produce, necessarily diminished the demand for skilled labour. To counteract this evil, the workmen in many of the manufacturing districts formed themselves into large bands, forced open the manufactories, and broke the engine-looms to pieces; destroying a vast amount of property, and ruining many of those masters to whom they looked for employment. In some places the masters, terrified, submitted to their demands; in others, the military were called out, and some degree of tranquillity and order was restored; but still the distress remained, and demanded the anxious attention of the Government of the country.

Wellington was not by nature an alarmist, and believing the sufferings of the people to be exaggerated, and that amid the misery, which could not be denied, there were still unmistakable signs of returning prosperity to

be discerned, he did not hesitate to speak words of comfort to those who would have more satisfaction in seeing their own forebodings justified by his participation in them. His motto, like that which Burke in seasons of still greater gloom preached to his timid and vacillating hearers, was *sursum corda.* And the language which he put into the mouth of his royal master at the opening of Parliament in 1830 was in accordance with his own manly views.

The royal speech announced to the country that "the "exports in the last year of British produce and manu- "factures had exceeded those of any former year; la- "mented that, notwithstanding this indication of active "commerce, distress should prevail among the agricul- "tural and manufacturing classes in some parts of the "United Kingdom," but declared that, notwithstanding his Majesty's desire "to be enabled to propose for the "consideration of his Parliament measures calculated to "relieve the difficulties of any part of his subjects, he "was impressed with the necessity of acting with ex- "treme caution in reference to this important subject; "and that he felt assured that Parliament would concur "with him in assigning due weight to the unfavourable "seasons, and to other causes which were beyond the "reach of legislative control or remedy."

The attacks which this moderate and reasonable language provoked were loud and various; and it was plain that its assailants declined to recognize the propriety of caution in the Opposition, however it might become the Ministry. By some speakers the Duke himself was addressed in terms of regretful hostility. No credit was allowed him for the relief granted to the Roman Catholics, which was declared to be a measure which "had been un- "willingly extorted from him by menaces, denunciations,

" and intimidation :" * and the speaker lamented that he, " to whom for his former career his countrymen owed so " large a debt of admiration and gratitude, should ever " have accepted the post of Prime Minister, in which " he had everything to lose and nothing to gain: and " should have tarnished his laurels by adopting all the " errors and mistakes of his predecessors." The Duke of Richmond too, a veteran of the gallant 52nd, while alluding to the happy days which he had passed while serving " under Wellington's banner," and declaring that if he were to consult his personal feelings alone, they would lead him in every case to support his old commander, was even more bitter on the words which he had put into the King's mouth, characterizing them as a warning to the labourer and manufacturer that they must starve, and only requiring them to starve with patience. " He hoped," he said, " that the expression of " opinion in that House would be strong enough to " show the Noble Duke that their Lordships intended to " do their duty, and to act with justice to all."

The causes to which the assailants of the Government ascribed the distress were various, and so accordingly were the remedies which they proposed. Some found the seeds of the evil in the return to cash payments and the abolition of one-pound notes; others attributed it to the new Corn Law, which had kept down the price of corn in spite of a bad harvest; while the Navigation Laws, which, as recently altered, permitted the importation of foreign goods in foreign vessels, did not escape the imputation of having added to the general distress by the novel competition to which our shipowners were now exposed. And an unlimited creation of paper money, a return to the old practice of almost universal

* See Lord Stanhope's speech on the Address, February 4.

restriction, and an extensive reduction of taxes were each in turn pressed on the Government by advisers who insisted in believing that there could be no distress that did not proceed from errors in legislation, which, like the fairy spear of the warrior of old, was alone able to heal the wounds it had inflicted.

All these assailants, and all these advisers, Wellington had to encounter almost single-handed; and his readiness as a debater increasing rapidly amid such unceasing conflicts, he displayed a fertility as well as a soundness of argument, that fully enabled him to hold his ground against more practised rhetoricians. He maintained, that not only was the royal speech justified in ascribing much of the distress, which he admitted to be "very "general," to causes beyond the reach of legislative control or remedy; but he affirmed too that one of those causes, being the great improvements and inventions in machinery which had taken place in late years, bore in itself the seeds of a future prosperity, which would more than counterbalance the suffering which they had an inevitable tendency to cause at their first introduction. He asserted also that the speech was equally correct in pointing to the increased exports of British manufactures as evidence of a state of affairs in which there was more reason to hope than to despair; and that it was corroborated by the steady augmentation of traffic which was taking place on every road and canal in the kingdom; and by the numbers of new houses which were being built in every direction. The state of the revenue led, he declared, irresistibly to the same conclusion, since it had not fallen off in the last fifteen years, though no less a sum than 27,000,000*l.* of taxes had been repealed in that period. Since this fact was an indication of a greatly increased consumption of taxable articles, which proved the exist-

ence of a generally healthy state of affairs, that there were many difficulties in the way of all classes he admitted, but if the country would (as he doubted not that it would) pluck up a spirit to conquer its difficulties, they should soon, he foretold, see prosperity revive.

The fallacies of those who advocated an unlimited creation of paper money he exposed in the clearest manner: he showed that during the last year the amount of money in circulation had exceeded by upwards of a million the largest sum on record as being in circulation in any previous year; and he argued from this fact, that what was desired was not more real money for the proper business of the kingdom, but fictitious capital to be lent to and employed in all kinds of speculation. Such a system had, a few years before, almost ruined the country; it was one great cause of the distress now prevailing, and he had no desire to see the nation return to it.

With respect to the new Corn Law introduced in 1828, he maintained "that it had worked well. It had "protected the agriculturist, and at the same time it "had prevented the price of corn from rising to an ex- "travagant rate, or from falling to an unremunerative "price, though 3,500,000 quarters of wheat had been "imported during the past year." In fact, in spite of this enormous importation, corn had been dear, but the money had gone "into the pockets of our own agricul- "turists, and not in those of the foreigner." Nor had the new law ever required to be infringed, or amended, or suspended. If it gave "protection to the agricultural "interest of the country, in his mind that was a most "important object; not only for the nobility and gentry "of the kingdom, but also for the people in general, to "whom it insured a certain supply of corn of home "growth, whether the year happened to be unproductive

"or otherwise. It would not be wise to place ourselves "too much in the power of foreigners." With respect to the complaints advanced on behalf of the shipping interest, he asserted and proved, that since the modification of the old Navigation Laws now so much complained of, our merchant vessels had gone on continually increasing in number and in tonnage; till during the last year they had very considerably exceeded the greatest amount previously known in the commercial history of the country. He touched also on the recommendation to reduce the taxes. This has at all times been a fertile subject for demagogues, and its evident plausibility had recommended it even to high-minded members of the Opposition, who, as they would have disdained any attempt to make political capital for themselves out of the distress of the people, and the consequent difficulties of the Government, must undoubtedly have believed that means might be found of reducing their general recommendation to practice. He quite agreed that to reduce the taxation, and especially that portion of it which pressed upon the labouring poor, was the duty of every administrator, and affirmed it to be the most anxious wish of his own Cabinet. In fact, he and his colleagues had proposed a very large reduction of taxation, choosing especially those imposts for diminution "which, as compared with others, would take the "smallest sum out of the Treasury, and put the largest "amount into the pockets of the people. He was quite "convinced that at the existing time reduction of taxa-"tion could not be carried further consistently with a "regard to the due interests of the country."

And this boast, which was fully borne out by the facts, he was enabled to make by the great administrative skill and disinterestedness with which he had introduced the

most rigid economy into every department of the State; often distributing lucrative employments, not among his own friends, or those of his political supporters, but among those who, being already in the receipt of half-pay, or of pensions, by their acceptance of the posts which he proffered to them, relieved the country from the other payments to which they had been entitled: while by judicious retrenchment in every branch of the public expenditure, and especially in the military and naval departments, he had reduced the estimates by above a million of money, without in the least impairing the efficiency of their several services; extorting even from his determined opponents the admission that no Administration had ever before consented to resign such an amount of patronage, and that every reduction possible had been made by the Government.

With these arguments, backed up as they were by the conspicuous administrative ability displayed by the Government, he easily defeated every proposition made by the Opposition; obtaining his largest majorities on two motions made by Lord Stanhope and the Duke of Richmond for committees to inquire into the state of the nation and of the labouring classes, which, he declared, as amounted to direct motions of a declaration of a want of confidence in the Ministry, and which, by the studied and comprehensive vagueness of the terms in which the motions were framed so as to allure supporters of every shade of politics, appeared to have been dictated by some ulterior object, and not solely by the wish to discover a remedy for the existing distress. Even some of the speakers on behalf of the Duke of Richmond's motion had admitted that it could not lead to any practical result, or to any relief of the poor; while of those who professed to expect some tangible effect from it, no two agreed even as

to what should be the subjects of investigation by the committee. To an inquiry into the state and administration of the Poor Laws Wellington said that he should not by itself have had any objection; but that it was a most difficult subject, one which had long occupied the attention of Parliament and of the ablest statesmen in the kingdom; and being therefore one which ought only to be approached with the greatest caution, it was evident that it could only be investigated with a proper degree of attention and impartiality when the country should be restored to a state of prosperity.*

But in the House of Commons an attack was made upon the Duke's policy, and that too on a matter affecting him personally, which it was much harder satisfactorily to repel. He had been greatly deceived when he affirmed that his duel with Lord Winchilsea had quelled hostility or stifled calumny. He was equally deceived in thinking that the satisfaction of the Irish Roman Catholics at the relief which he had procured for them would be sufficient to bring them back to the paths of order and tranquillity. On the contrary, O'Connell himself, who, while urging the concession, had been the loudest in proclaiming the gratitude which they would feel for it, the moment it was granted turned with redoubled animosity upon those who had granted it, heaping upon them personally the most unmeasured abuse: the Duke was a "stunted corporal," Peel "a bigot;" both were men whom no one could trust, as "having been false to "their own party, and therefore incapable of being true" to any; while the Protestant adherents of the Government were "a pack of bloodhounds," all connection with whom was to be washed off as a foul stain by every friend of Ireland: he proclaimed openly that the minis-

* See the speeches of Lord Palmerston and Lord Althorp, Feb. 19.

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ters had yielded, not to reason but to fear; that no obedience whatever should be paid to that clause in the Relief Bill, which enjoined the suppression of the monastic orders, and that the Government would not dare to enforce it. He lifted up his voice for a repeal of the Union with a louder cry than he had ever demanded emancipation, and before three months had passed succeeded in inflaming the evil passions of the different religious sects in his country to such a height, that on the next anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, within three months after the passing of the Relief Bill, some of the most violent and blood-stained faction-fights took place that had disgraced Ireland for many years.

The leaders of the Orange Society were almost as culpable, though not so mischievous. They looked upon themselves as the especial champions of Protestant ascendency, and openly accused the Duke of such "unbounded ambition" as to aspire to seize the throne on the next vacancy; actually going so far as to present an address to George IV., conjuring him to open his eyes to the designing treachery of his minister, which the new police lately established was designed and prepared to assist.* But in mere violent personal abuse some of the ultra-Tory papers in England surpassed all rivalry; and one, the 'Morning Journal,' in the course of the summer of 1829, had published a series of articles assailing the Government as a body, and the Duke and the Lord Chancellor by name, on account of their conduct on the Roman Catholic question. The accusation made against Lord Lyndhurst was one which a judge could not well pass over, being no less than a charge that he had prosti-

* Miseros interdum cives optime de republicâ meritos! in quibus homines non modo res præclarissimas obliviscuntur, sed etiam nefarias suspicantur.—*Cic. pro Milone*, xiii.

tuted his high position so far as to sell for large sums the appointment to important offices in his gift; but the reproaches levelled at the Duke were confined to virulent language, without any attempt being made to justify it by facts. He was called "an imperious Minister," "an ambitious Minister," "a dangerous Minister;" it was said that in carrying the Relief Bill he had been guilty "either "of the grossest treachery, or else of the most arrant "cowardice, or else of treachery, cowardice, and artifice "united." He was described as a man of "despicable "cant and affected moderation;" as "destitute of mercy, "compassion, and of those more kindly and tender sym-"pathies which distinguish the heart of a man from that "of a proud dictator and tyrant." It was asserted also that his measures had made "the King himself so un-"popular that his Majesty dared not show himself in "public, or even go to the theatre;" and that the King was so well aware of the feelings with which he was regarded in consequence of those measures, that "he had "lately evinced more than even a marked coldness to the "Duke."

It might have been thought that if there had ever lived any one who could afford to laugh at charges of treachery, artifice, and cowardice, it would have been a soldier and statesman who had already spent upwards of forty years in doing loyal service to his Sovereign and his country, whose unswerving love of candour and truth had extorted admiration and confidence even from those who had never admired or even understood truth and candour before; and who had established the superiority of his nation over the whole world in a hundred battles. But Wellington's irritability was not yet allayed; perhaps it was in some degree increased by the disappointment which the disturbances in Ireland must have

caused him; and in an evil hour he directed Sir James Scarlett, the Attorney-General, to prosecute Mr. Alexander, the proprietor of the 'Morning Journal,' for libels upon himself, the Government, and the King; upon the last mentioned, because it was argued that "to "represent the feelings or opinions of his Majesty as "under the coercion of his ministers tended to degrade "him, and to bring his Government into contempt." It may be doubted whether the eloquence of any advocate could now persuade any jury to call the statements objected to libels; but Scarlett was unrivalled in the conduct of a case and in the management of juries, and he obtained a verdict which (in spite of a strongly-pronounced recommendation of the defendant to the mercy of the court in consideration of the fact that the articles in question had been written at a time of unprecedented agitation) was followed by a sentence upon Mr. Alexander of a year's imprisonment, and of a fine of a hundred pounds, while he was further obliged to find heavy security for his good behaviour for three years.

At the beginning of March these prosecutions were brought under the notice of the House of Commons by Sir C. Wetherell, whose indignation was no doubt sharpened by the fact that, in consequence of his opposition to the Emancipation Bill, he had been deprived of the office of Attorney-General to make way for Scarlett. His zeal was further sharpened by the friendship with which he was regarded by the Duke of Cumberland, whose chaplain was avowed to be the author of one of the libels complained of, but who, nevertheless, was passed over in the prosecution, the framers of which, by a very unusual stretch of authority, preferred attacking the publisher to proceeding against the author. Though Sir Charles's language was strong, he yet carried the House with him

when he denounced the prosecutions as "partial, unfair, "oppressive;" as "a vexatious, a tyrannical, an unjust "proceeding;" compared them to the dealings of the Star-Chamber, or to the traditionary stories of the timid vengeance of Tiberius. It is sad to think that the Duke of Wellington should, in an hour unworthy of himself, have given ground for the application of such language to his conduct, and should have disarmed his friends of any adequate reply.* Who could deny Sir Charles's assertion that, while the whole nation acknowledged the boundless gratitude which they owed to him for his warlike achievements, they had also a right when he became a minister to separate the civilian from the soldier, to speak of him as a minister, and, looking on him in that light, to animadvert upon his actions as open to legitimate criticism? Sir Charles denied that the expressions complained of in the articles of the 'Morning Journal' were libellous. Most of them, in fact, he affirmed to be true; arguing that no one could rise to be a minister in such a country as ours who was not ambitious, and that every one who was ambitious was necessarily dangerous. He did not deny that much of Mr. Alexander's language was coarse, vulgar, reprehensible, for which he might fitly have been called to the bar of the House, and reprimanded; but he maintained—supporting his arguments by a reference to cases in which former ministers, such as Canning, had been attacked in violent language—that to bring its utterer to a criminal bar was almost unprecedented, and utterly unjustifiable. The reply of the Attorney-General was confined chiefly to his own personal defence in respect of the manner in which he, as a lawyer, had conducted the

* Pudet hæc opprobria nobis
Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.—OVID'S *Met.*

prosecutions; and Peel, to whose lot it fell to justify the prosecutions themselves, made a most feeble defence, relying chiefly on the argument that, as one of the libels was stated to have proceeded from a dependent of a royal duke, that circumstance rendered it more imperative than it otherwise might have been to show that it could be justified neither in fact nor in law. Had it proceeded from any person in a less conspicuous situation, he admitted that he himself should not have been inclined to solicit the protection of a court of law.

So unpopular have Government prosecutions of the press at all times been that there was no event of the Duke's administration which made him more unpopular; and certainly, if we look at one portion of the alleged libels, which were contemptible from their virulent coarseness of language, as well as from the intrinsic absurdity of the charges which they alleged, and at the vague generalities of the remainder, which were couched in terms so equivocal as not necessarily to convey any reproach at all, it is impossible to avoid feeling deep regret that the Duke on this occasion departed from his wonted equanimity, and by his ill-judged prosecution of a vulgar enemy invested him with the honourable appearance of a martyr, when his own conduct, if passed over with a wise and becoming disdain, would have stamped him as a foul-mouthed railer, beneath punishment only because he was beneath notice.

CHAPTER XLV.

Death of the King—Dissolution of Parliament—Revolutions in France and Belgium—We recognize Louis Philippe—Death of Mr. Huskisson.

THE session was brought to a premature end by the death of the King. He had long been in an infirm state of health, though it was not till the end of May that his disease began to exhibit alarming symptoms; then he became unable to sign his name, and an Act of Parliament was passed to enable him to give the necessary sanction to deeds requiring his signature by authorizing a minister to affix a stamp to them in his presence. On the 20th of June he died, leaving behind him a reputation for very considerable abilities, and, in the opinion of those who knew him best, such as the Duke of Wellington himself, for many innate good qualities of disposition, had they not been in a great degree stifled by the peculiar difficulties and temptations of his position, and marred and perverted by very injudicious education. In the address of mingled congratulation and condolence which the Duke, as Prime Minister, proposed to his brother Peers to be offered to their new Sovereign, he, with excellent taste and judgment, avoided

all allusion to the spots which dimmed the lustre of the departed Monarch; and dwelt more willingly on what none could deny, "his condescension and affability; "his very general and extensive capacity and knowledge "of the most minute affairs of life, beyond what could "have been expected from a person who had at all times "filled so exalted a situation;" and on his magnificent and at the same time judicious patronage of art, not only in this country, but in every part of Europe. He contrasted the state of affairs when, as Regent, he had first come into the possession of supreme authority, and congratulated both Parliament and the country on the declaration which his successor had made, that he designed to follow the example of his father and of his brother.

The law permitted the Parliament in existence at the death of a Sovereign to continue for six months longer; but the ministers determined to dissolve the existing Parliament with all speed, and the royal message which they accordingly advised the new King to send down announcing that intention, and recommending the adoption of a temporary provision for the public service, provoked the fiercest debate that had agitated the House of Lords in the whole session. Wellington, in moving an address in answer to his Majesty's message, stated his reason for the advice which he had given, which was manifestly founded on practical good sense, that though there were still many subjects of importance awaiting the consideration of the two Houses, it nevertheless could not be expected that the requisite attention should be paid to them by members preparing for a general election, and absorbed by their anxiety for their own personal interests. He therefore proposed that such sums as might be necessary for the public service should

be placed at the disposal of the ministers till a new Parliament could be assembled. It is probable that he was surprised to find how vehement an opposition his proposal kindled. Lord Grey attacked it with the greatest vehemence: he objected much to the haste shown for a dissolution; still more to the "very meagre "explanation" which, as he maintained, the Duke had given of the grounds which rendered it advisable; he admitted, indeed, that it was desirable not to protract "the state of excitement which precedes and accom- "panies a general election," but he assailed the ministers in unmeasured terms as having, by their want of good management, allowed the business of the session to fall so greatly into arrear that an immediate dissolution must cause the abandonment of many measures of importance which now, at the end of the fifth month of the session, ought to be at the point of completion. He asserted that they had shown themselves incapable of conducting the business of the country, and quite undeserving of the confidence of Parliament. He admitted that the measures now proposed were in conformity with those adopted on the death of George III., but maintained that the precedent then established was a bad one, and also that the circumstances of that time differed from those of the present moment in that the Parliament then dissolved was only at the commencement of its session. His main objection, however, and the only one which had any real force, was that, since the heir-presumptive to the throne (our present most gracious Majesty) was a minor, it was highly improper to dissolve the Parliament without making provision for a Regency in case of any unforeseen accident happening to the King before the meeting of a new Parliament. He would not himself propose any measure of the kind:

it ought only to be brought forward by the ministers of the Crown after the delivery of a royal message to recommend it; but he moved the adjournment of the debate, in order to give time for such a message to be conveyed to the House.

It was in vain that the Lord Chancellor referred to the beginning of the reign of George III., when several sessions were allowed to elapse without any provision for a regency. Lord Grey's amendment was supported by orators from every side of the House; by Lord Winchilsea, who pronounced that that minister must be a bold man who advised his Majesty to dissolve the Parliament without providing for so possible an event as a fresh vacancy of the throne; by Lord Lansdowne, who did not see how Parliament could lend a hand, as it were, to its own dissolution, leaving a case of so much importance, involving so momentous a principle of the Constitution unprovided for; by Lord Eldon, who made himself unusually merry at the idea of the convenience which a minister, fond of dictation, might find on having "an "infant sovereign, a little king, whom he might dandle "and play with;" by the Duke of Richmond, whose attacks were directed at the Government generally, which he described as one of expediency, full of vacillating purposes, which never introduced measures on proper grounds; and by Lord Mansfield, who gave as his reason for his vote, his want of confidence in the Government, which had been engendered by "the un-"feigned indignation which he felt in common with "other Noble Lords at the measure of the last session" (the Roman Catholic Relief Bill). Those who opposed the Ministry had, he said, been accused of having entered into an unnatural coalition, and he admitted

that recent circumstances "had led to a coincidence of "opinion amongst those who did not formerly agree "in many subjects; but they were united by one com- "mon legitimate bond, a want of confidence in the "Government, on which they would make attacks in "whatever way appeared most likely to be useful to the "country."

The Duke defended the decision of the Administration very briefly, regretting the loss of the confidence of Lord Mansfield and his friends, but avowing that if the deed which had displeased them last year were still to be done, he should take the same steps now which he had taken then; and affirming that the Regency was a question of such difficulty that it could not be settled with propriety by the existing Parliament. His views were supported by a large majority. But it cannot be denied that his opponents had great reason on their side when they urged that no delay should be permitted in making provision for an event so possible as the death of a king sixty-six years of age; and that the Duke's own statement of the difficulties with which the question of the Regency was surrounded was in some degree contradicted by the fact that, though its discussion was interrupted by a change of the Administration, a Regency Bill was nevertheless carried through both Houses in a single month, and excited but a very brief and comparatively unimportant discussion.

All difficulties being thus surmounted, preparations were made for an immediate dissolution of Parliament; but the existing one had during the last month or two given many ominous signs of the future. The Bill for the disfranchisement of East Retford had again been brought in, and when the ministers proposed to transfer the seats to be thus rendered vacant to the hundred

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of Bassetlaw, the Opposition again made a vigorous struggle to secure them for Birmingham. They were defeated on a division, and many of the supporters of the Government on this occasion afterwards bitterly repented the vote which they now gave, seeing that it was to this obstinate resistance to the very slightest reform that the introduction in the next year of the sweeping measure proposed by Lord Grey's Government was to be chiefly attributed. Some of the ablest men on either side of the House already foresaw such a result; and Mr. Huskisson, adhering to Canning's principles of hostility to reform, voted for giving the vacant seats to Birmingham, on the express ground that such a timely concession, by the hopes which it would hold out to other important towns of gradually obtaining the franchise, would check the desire for any extensive and simultaneous plan of reform; while Lord Howick supported the ministers on the very same ground, perceiving that their resistance to such a reasonable proposition would only tend to make the cry for reform more loud and general and irresistible. The reforming party however, gaining, if not renewed strength, at least renewed boldness from having been thus thrown to the ground, made a fresh attempt to carry their point in a more direct manner, supporting a motion made by Lord John Russell, to grant to Manchester, Birmingham, and Leeds the right of returning members to the House of Commons without waiting till a vacancy should be made for the new members by the disfranchisement of any of the existing boroughs.

This proposition also was negatived, though by no very large majority, and it was followed by others of a more general character, brought forward on both sides of the House. The Marquess of Blandford was a Tory,

but his indignation at the House of Commons for passing the Roman Catholic Relief Bill rendered him as eager to reform that body as the most extreme Radical; and he now proposed a sweeping measure, containing clauses for a most extensive disfranchisement of the smaller boroughs, and a provision also for reviving the system of the payment of Members of Parliament, which he anticipated likely to prove an effectual preventive of abuses, though how it was to have any such effect it is not very easy to conceive. When this Bill was rejected, Mr. O'Connell brought forward a substitute for it of the most democratic character, proposing to establish triennial parliaments, universal suffrage, and vote by ballot. He could scarcely muster a dozen supporters, and his proposal would hardly have been worth mentioning at all, had not Lord Althorp, the eldest son of Lord Spencer (and who, as such, though endowed with no very brilliant capacity, was recognized by the Whig party in the House of Commons as their leader), proclaimed his approval of triennial parliaments and the ballot, though not of universal suffrage; and had not Lord John Russell taken occasion of the debate to move resolutions asserting the propriety of giving the franchise to many large towns which as yet had not received it, and additional members to several of the largest counties; and pledging the House to the partial disfranchisement of many of the smaller boroughs, which for the future should return only one member instead of two, their other representative being purchased from them by a pecuniary payment to be made by the nation, and spread over a term of years. These resolutions however were rejected, and before the end of July the Parliament was dissolved, and summoned to meet again on the 2nd of November.

Before any of the new elections could take place,

strange and startling events occurred on the Continent, which greatly strengthened the party eager for reform and opposed to the Government in this country. In France, the progress of liberal opinions, supported by the ceaseless intrigues of the partisans of the Duke of Orleans, had rendered it very difficult for any administration to maintain its ground which was not prepared to make considerable concessions to the popular feeling; but instead of doing so, Prince Polignac, who had lately become Prime Minister, only showed himself the more resolute to oppose it the more strongly it developed itself; and the King, a bigoted slave to his priests, was but too well inclined to adopt the most arbitrary measures which could be suggested to him. The newspapers which contained articles displeasing to the Government were prosecuted, and their editors were fined and imprisoned. The Chamber of Deputies was dissolved, which latter step, however, since they had presented an address to the King avowing their distrust of the ministers, would have been perfectly justifiable, had it not been followed by the most undisguised exercise of every conceivable means of corruption and intimidation on the part of the Government to procure the election of a more complaisant body. Such conduct failed, as it deserved to fail. It was in vain that Polignac, to divert the public attention, fitted out a formidable expedition of naval and military forces to effect the reduction of Algiers: for once the nation was deaf even to the allurements of military glory, and concentrated its whole soul upon the Parliamentary elections. In them it gained the victory which it desired. When they were completed it was ascertained that the Opposition could count nearly two-thirds of the members of the Chamber in its ranks, and it was plain that the new

Chamber and the Administration could not exist together.

In such a crisis, Prince Polignac recommended to his infatuated master a course which it is perfectly marvellous that any one, with the example of the last forty years before his eyes, could have conceived for a moment. The Chamber had been summoned to meet on the 3rd of August; on the 25th the King signed a set of ordinances dissolving the Chamber of Deputies, though it had never met, on the ground that the voters who had elected it had been "deceived and misled by manœuvres "which had been practised in various parts of the king-"dom;" establishing a new system of election, which was undisguisedly though clumsily devised to render the influence of the Crown irresistible for the future; and suspending the liberty of the periodical press, and of any kind of publication which should "treat wholly "or in part of political matters." It was not wonderful that such an edict, which, if obeyed, would have amounted to a complete re-establishment of arbitrary power, kindled a general flame of resistance in every part of France, but even the most sagacious must have been amazed at the suddenness and unextinguishable character of the conflagration which ensued. It was on the morning of the 26th of July that these ordinances appeared in the 'Moniteur,' the Government paper. On the 27th, the agents of the police began to put the edict against the press in force, by seizing the printing-presses of some of the Opposition journals. On the 28th, the population of Paris rose in open insurrection, defeated the royal guards in pitched battle in the streets, and continued to gain strength every hour, till Marmont, who had the chief military command in the city, despaired of making any effectual resistance, and proposed a suspen-

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sion of arms, which, in such a case, was an open acknowledgment of defeat; and on the 2nd of August, Charles X., who for safety to his person had retired to Rambouillet, abdicated the kingdom in favour of his grandson, the Duc de Bordeaux. But those who had driven him to this abdication were too conscious of their own strength to regard it. Already, those of the deputies who were in Paris had formed themselves into a legislative body as the representatives of the nation, and, having declared the throne vacant, had named the Duke of Orleans Lieutenant-General of the kingdom; and the first week of August had not come to an end when, arrogating to themselves the supreme authority, which could not have belonged to them even if they had been assembled in their entire numbers, they bestowed the crown on the Duke of Orleans. That Prince eagerly accepted the prize for which he had toiled so long, and now, exulting in the success of his unwearied intrigues against his kinsman, he assumed the titles of Louis Philippe I., King of the French, and mounted the throne from which he was at a subsequent period destined to descend in, if that were possible, a more shameful manner than he had attained it.

Nor did the spirit of revolution limit its triumphs to France. On the north-eastern frontier of that country lies Belgium, the inhabitants of which, being Roman Catholics, had never willingly acquiesced in the union of their country to Protestant Holland; they also complained that, in consequence of the King being a Dutchman, the union had never been fairly carried out, but that the Dutch monopolized all the principal posts of honour and profit in the kingdom; and they had long been ripe for any enterprise which might afford them a chance of deliverance from a yoke which

they detested, and from an union which they despised. The discontented party were in close communication with the Orleanists in France; and when intelligence of the events of July in the French capital, and of the entire success of the revolutionary party there, reached Brussels, it excited, as it was natural that it should excite, the Belgian malcontents to imitate their French allies; and they broke out into an insurrection, more formidable, if the means of resistance at the disposal of the authorities be considered, than that which in a few hours had driven Charles X. from a throne which his ancestors had occupied for nearly a thousand years. The houses of the ministers were demolished, the King's arms and all emblems of royalty were defaced or torn down from all the palaces and public buildings in Brussels; and a Provisional Government was appointed, which in effect completely superseded the King's authority. The King behaved with a courage and presence of mind in which Charles X. had shown himself lamentably deficient; he sent his eldest son, the Prince of Orange, the same who had fought at Waterloo, to the Belgian capital, with ample powers to redress grievances and to vindicate the royal authority; and the Prince behaved with a prudence and courage worthy of his great ancestors, who had first secured and established the independence of their country: but his efforts were vain, and at the beginning of September the leaders of the popular party made a formal demand for a dissolution of the union between Belgium and Holland, though they did not as yet exhibit any intention of throwing off their allegiance to the House of Orange.

But the conciliatory spirit in which the King listened to this demand, and referred it to the consideration of the States-General, encouraged the more violent party to

require still greater concessions, and, the flame of sedition gathering strength from its own progress, on the 19th of September the populace of Brussels renewed their insurrection with greater fury than before, defeated the troops with which Prince Frederick of Orange marched from Antwerp to suppress it; nor, though a few days afterwards intelligence arrived from the Hague that the States-General had approved of the dissolution of the Union, had that intelligence any effect in allaying the tumult; but the leaders of the sedition began to talk openly of an entire separation from Holland, and of an independent Government under a new dynasty. The Provisional Government summoned a congress of representatives from the Belgian provinces. All the Belgian portion of the army espoused their side, and having compelled the Dutch troops in Namur, Liege, Ghent, and other fortified places to retire, put these strong and wealthy towns into their hands. Encouraged by this advantage to rise still higher in their demands, the Provisional Government soon required the withdrawal of all the Dutch troops from Antwerp and Maestricht, which alone of the Belgian towns were still preserved to the King, as the sole condition on which they would enter into any negotiation with him or his family for the preservation of their authority. This requisition was of course refused, the Belgian army marched to attack Antwerp, the nation formally renounced its allegiance to its former King, and commenced war against him to compel him to relinquish the slight hold which he retained on any part of the Belgian territory.

These events were full of anxiety and perplexity to the English Cabinet. We were allied by treaty and by interest with both the Sovereigns whose rights were

thus invaded. And common report, more false than ever on this occasion, represented Wellington as the chosen friend and adviser of Prince Polignac, though, as the Duke declared* soon afterwards, he had never had the very slightest communication with that misguided and unfortunate statesman. We have already seen that he had a bad opinion of Louis Philippe, whom, knowing him to be unwearied in his intrigues against his kinsman and his Sovereign, he had, as far back as 1815, in vain endeavoured to keep in the path of loyalty and duty; and he knew well enough that the present revolution in France was far more the consequence of those intrigues than of King Charles's misgovernment. Still it could not be denied that the new sovereign had been placed on his throne by the voice of the people; and the principles which the Duke had lately announced with reference to Portugal he had to put in practice with regard to France. Yet his task was the more difficult, or at least the more delicate, since the exiled Royal Family again sought a refuge on our shores, and Wellington wished to avoid hurting the feelings of the expelled Sovereign by too prompt a recognition of his successful enemy. When the first news of the outbreak reached London, a friend asked him what was to be expected as its result.† "A "fresh dynasty," replied he. "And what shall you "do?" "Keep quiet for a while, and then consult our "allies." But events pressed on one another too rapidly to allow time for the intended consultation: the revolution was generally hailed with great enthusiasm in England; a special ambassador was sent by the new monarch to London to announce his accession to the throne, and the Duke at once counselled the King to

* See his speech, March 28, 1851.

† Guizot, 'Etude d'Histoire Contemporaine.'—Sir R. Peel, p. 44.

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receive him, and by so doing to give the earliest recognition of the new dynasty.

At the same time the royal exiles were received with the same hospitality which they had before experienced. For a few weeks they resided at Lulworth, in Dorsetshire, the seat of an English gentleman, though a Romish cardinal, Mr. Weld, who, deeply attached himself to his Church, looked upon the deposed monarch as a martyr to her principles, because his chief advisers in his infatuated measures had been the Jesuit priests. But before the end of the autumn the King of England placed Holyrood Castle at his disposal, and there, under the title of the Comte de Ponthieu, the aged prince passed the evening of his days, occupying himself with the education of his youthful grandson, whom he trusted, and whom many of his adherents yet trust, to see one day recover the rights and restore the glory of his ancestors as Henry V.; who has indeed seen Louis Philippe hurled by a just retribution from the throne which he so unworthily won, but who, by a strange fatality, seems to be only the more irrevocably fixed in his dethronement and banishment by the very event which he and his party anticipated and hailed as the sure realization of their most sanguine hopes.

Our recognition of the Belgian revolution was a more delicate matter, because the kingdom of the Netherlands had been erected at the Congress of Vienna in 1814, under a treaty to which England was one of the principal parties; and it was doubtful whether the King of the Netherlands himself had authority to dissolve the Union between Holland and Belgium without the sanction of those powers who, acting with a view to the peace of Europe, had consolidated them into one kingdom. The Belgian Provisional Government was sensible

of this difficulty, and sent M. Van de Weyer as their agent to England, to endeavour to procure our acquiescence in its measures; while at the same time the King of the Netherlands through his ambassadors made formal appeals to the different Courts which had been parties to the treaty of Vienna to preserve the throne which they had created. Wellington's opinion, as he subsequently stated in the House of Lords, was that the complaints against the Government of the King of the Netherlands were of the most trivial character, and that, generally speaking, the King had acted with the strictest conformity to the constitution of the country; but still he adhered to the great principle of non-interference with the internal affairs of foreign countries, and assured the Belgian envoy that he should not attempt to control Belgium in any manner in the choice of its Government, provided it were calculated to maintain peace; while, in the hope of securing that blessing, he invited the ambassadors of Austria, France, Russia, and Prussia to a conference, hoping to be able to propose some plan acceptable to both contending parties, which might arrest the hostilities which both seemed eager to commence.

While these events were taking place on the Continent, a calamity had occurred at home which, by leaving the Canningite party without a head, facilitated its subsequent junction with the Whig Ministry which so soon succeeded to office, and thus had probably no small influence on the future domestic policy of the kingdom. A couple of years before an Act of Parliament had passed, authorizing a company of sanguine, or, as many believed, crazy projectors to construct a railway between Liverpool and Manchester. The genius of Stephenson had surmounted the marvellous engineering difficulties

which, to those of less skill and self-reliance, seemed to render the undertaking impracticable; the work was finished, and on the 15th of September in this year it was thrown open to the public. The directors had resolved to celebrate an occurrence destined to have so important an influence on the future intercourse of the whole world by ceremonies worthy of so great and interesting an occasion; and the Duke of Wellington, who from the first appreciated the great advantage of such an invention if successfully carried out, and most especially the additional means of defence which it would furnish to a country like this, from the facilities which it would afford for moving troops, came down from London in order to grace the opening with his presence. Mr. Huskisson also, as one of the members for Liverpool, was naturally present to bear a part in a scene in which his constituents took so great an interest; and it occurred to some of their mutual friends who were among the guests of the new Company, that the festivity of the day offered a happy opportunity for effacing the coolness which the events of the previous year had caused between the Prime Minister and his former colleague. They both shared in the feeling, and had just shaken hands with the greatest cordiality, when, on the approach of one of the steam-engines, Huskisson made a hasty attempt to resume his seat in the carriage which he had just quitted to meet the Duke, missed his footing and fell under the engine, which crushed and mangled his right leg so severely as to cause his death in a few hours. The Duke was deeply shocked, and would have desired the ceremony to be deferred, but yielded to the entreaties of the Directors of the Company, to which, in the infancy of such undertakings, such a step might have been ruinous, as

indicating a doubt of their safety, and proceeded to Manchester; but so deep an impression did the tragedy which he had here witnessed make upon his mind, that many years elapsed before he could be induced to travel upon a railway, though the whole kingdom was speedily covered by them, and his chosen colleague, Sir Robert Peel, was one of their most ardent supporters.*

Huskisson's death was not the only disaster of the season; a far more serious calamity was the evil spirit which began to show itself in many parts of the country, not only in open outrage and the demolition of machinery by organized bands of rioters, but in a system of secret incendiarism which, as no precautions could guard against it, struck unprecedented terror into the inhabitants of the southern counties in which it chiefly raged.

In Ireland too things were going on worse than ever: O'Connell continuing his agitation for the Repeal of the Union, and pointing in triumph to the separation just effected between Belgium and Holland, had roused his countrymen to such a pitch of excitement, that in some counties the magistrates had been forced to call for the aid of the troops to preserve peace, and the Lord-Lieutenant to issue a public proclamation prohibiting the meeting of a new association which had been formed to promote the Repeal; and though the higher classes, not only of the laity, but also of the priesthood, discouraged the agitation by all the means in their power, yet the joy with which the lower orders listened to O'Connell's fanatic denunciations of the English Government, and to the coarse and indecent personal abuse with which he reviled the leading statesmen of the country, proved the existence of a spirit of disaffection

* Stephenson's Life, p. 350.

which might have become very dangerous to the peace of the empire, had not their leader's want of courage been equal to his want of honesty.

Such were some of the anxious circumstances under which the Duke and his colleagues prepared to meet the new Parliament, and they already knew that the vehemence of the opposition to which the relief of the Roman Catholics had excited a section of the extreme Tories had been carried into the recent elections, and that a considerable number of their supporters had been supplanted by their adversaries. But, though even before the dissolution the ministers were fully aware that this would be the case,* Wellington resolutely refused to allow the influence of the Government to be exerted to control the elections, though there were of course many places where that influence, if put forth, would have been irresistible, and though there was no precedent for such abstinence. His desire, however, was that his Administration should stand or fall by its own merits, acting on the unbiassed voice of the country; and thus, even though his conduct on this point still further alienated some of his partisans who had hoped to find their private advantage in their partisanship, he persisted in maintaining the perfect impartiality of the Government, setting an example not the less honourable that it has never been followed.

* Lord Brougham, 'Sketches of Statesmen of George III.' ii., 359.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The King's Speech—Debate on it; and revival of the Discussion on Reform—The King postpones his Visit to the City of London—Attacks on the Ministry in consequence—They are defeated on Sir H. Parnell's motion, and resign—Great services of the Duke's Government.

ON the 2nd of November the King opened Parliament in person, and the speech which the Duke put into his mouth was one of uncommon length, and in some of its parts provoked an unusual degree of animadversion. With respect to the French revolution, it simply announced that "the elder branch of the house of Bourbon "no longer reigned in France, that the Duke of Orleans "had been called to the throne, and that having received "from the new Sovereign a declaration of his earnest "desire to cultivate the good understanding and to "maintain inviolate all the engagements subsisting "with this country, his Majesty had not hesitated to "continue his diplomatic relations and friendly inter-"course with the French court." But the state of affairs in Belgium was mentioned in a somewhat different spirit. The events in that kingdom, the speech proceeded to say, his Majesty "had witnessed with deep "regret, lamenting that the enlightened administration "of the King had not preserved his dominions from

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"revolt," and he informed Parliament that "he himself "was endeavouring in concert with his allies to devise "such means of restoring tranquillity as might be com- "patible with the welfare and good government of the "Netherlands, and with the future security of other "states." "To Lisbon" his Majesty "had not yet ac- "credited his ambassador, but, as the Portuguese Govern- "ment had determined to perform a great act of justice "and humanity by the grant of a general amnesty, he "thought that the time might shortly arrive when the "interests of his subjects would demand a renewal of "those relations which had so long subsisted between "the two countries."

With respect to the internal affairs of the kingdom, after recommending the immediate settlement of the Regency; and promising his "concurrence in any mea- "sures which might appear best calculated to maintain "unimpaired the stability and dignity of the Crown, and "thereby to strengthen the securities by which the civil "and religious liberties of the people are guarded;" and enjoining the strictest economy in every branch of the public expenditure, his Majesty went on to express in dignified terms his sorrow at the lawless combinations and outrages which had disturbed some districts of the country, and "the grief and indignation with which he "viewed the efforts which were industriously made to "excite among his people a spirit of discontent and "disaffection, and to disturb the concord which happily "prevailed between those parts of his dominions, the "union of which is essential to their common strength "and happiness;" avowing his firm reliance "on the "loyalty and affectionate attachment of the great body "of his people, and on their just appreciation of the full "advantage of that happy form of Government under

"which, through the favour of Divine Providence, this "country had enjoyed for a long succession of years a "greater share of internal peace, of commercial pros- "perity, of true liberty, of all that constitutes social "happiness that has fallen to the lot of any other "country of the world."

The attack on the speech was headed by the Tories, by Lord Winchilsea, and the Duke of Richmond, who insisted warmly that it laid too little stress on the distress of the agricultural interests, and held out by far too slight a prospect of relief to them; and by Lord Farnham, who attributed the discontent existing not only in England but in Ireland to the bill for the relief of the Roman Catholics; but the most important speech which proceeded from the Opposition benches was that delivered by Lord Grey, who, with great moderation —for he did not consider himself, as he declared a few nights afterwards, a political enemy of the Duke— remonstrated against the language held in the royal speech on the subject of some of our foreign relations; to the proposed recognition of the authority of Don Miguel in Portugal, and still more to the application of the term "revolt" to the rising of the Belgians, as a word which in his opinion prejudged the question between them and the King of Holland, and would render it impossible for us hereafter to act as impartial mediators, if we should wish to assume, or if others should desire to invest us with that character. He argued at some length, and repeated his assertion a few nights afterwards, that the treaties of Vienna, by which the kingdom of the Netherlands had originally been established, imposed upon us no obligation whatever to interfere under existing circumstances; and pronounced that any, even the most amicable, interference on our part would be contrary to

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the policy usually pursued by us; and would be inevitably pernicious to our interests. To the prompt recognition of the new Government in France he gave the most cordial praise, as he likewise did to the language of just indignation in which the King had been advised to speak of the agitation for the repeal of the Union. But the portion of his speech which subsequent events invested with the most important interest, was that which touched on the old question of Parliamentary Reform. Lord Farnham had alluded to the unsettled state of the Continent, and had bid us prepare for war; and Lord Grey, though not sharing his apprehensions, was also desirous that the ministers should make the best and most solid preparations against war "by securing the "affections of our fellow-countrymen, and redressing "their grievances by a reform of the Parliament." He admitted that in the early part of his life he might have urged this question with somewhat of "the rashness of "youth; not that he had ever thought that reform "should be insisted on as a matter of popular right;" but he did hope now that "it would not be put off any "longer, but that it would be considered in time, so "that measures might be introduced by which gradual "reforms might be effected without danger to the insti-"tutions of the country."

Nor were these words of the eloquent old Earl unpremeditated or uttered without concert with others of his party: on the contrary, the same evening in the House of Commons Mr. Brougham gave notice that on the 16th he would introduce a bill to remedy the defects of which he complained in the representation of the people. But the Duke was inclined to acquiesce in no such measures. He replied to Lord Grey in a manly, straightforward speech, vindicating his policy from the few objections

which that nobleman had advanced against it, showing not only that the amnesty which the Portuguese Government had announced supplied us with a sufficient reason for recognizing that Government, but also that such a recognition on our part would tend greatly to prevent the amnesty from becoming, as Lord Grey apprehended, a dead letter. He fully justified the application of the term "revolt" to the events which had taken place in Belgium, pointing out how trivial the grievances alleged by the Belgians were, and that "no complaint whatever had been made either "against the King of the Netherlands personally, or "against his administration, until the revolters had "attained a certain degree of success, and had begun to "aim at what in the first instance they had not con-"templated;" and he affirmed that they themselves would neither deny the correctness of his statement nor repudiate the word "revolt" as applied to their proceedings; and he argued irresistibly that the circumstances under which the kingdom of the Netherlands had been originally constructed made it proper for the powers who had been parties to the treaty of Vienna to interpose amicably with a view to reconcile the differences between the King and his late subjects. Any intention "to interfere by means of arms with the "arrangements respecting the Netherlands he positively "denied."

With reference to matters of domestic policy, he declared his total disagreement with the statement of Lord Farnham, that any of the existing distress or discontent was attributable to the concessions lately made to the Roman Catholics; it would, he affirmed, have been more correct to say that "much of the present "state of Ireland might be attributed to the way in "which those concessions had been so long opposed;"

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and he also affirmed that even while he was speaking, Ireland would have been in a better condition "had his "Majesty's Government been properly supported on that "question—if it had been supported as vehemently as "it had been opposed." The chief interest, however, of the Duke's speech, as of that of Lord Grey, lay in the declaration on the subject of reform with which he concluded. He avowed that the Government were prepared with no such measure. "Nay, on his own part he "would go further and say that he had never read or "heard of any measure up to that moment which in any "degree satisfied his mind that the state of the repre-"sentation could be improved or be rendered more satis-"factory to the country at large than at that moment. "He would not hesitate to declare his sentiments un-"equivocally: he was fully convinced that the country "possessed at that moment a legislature which answered "all good purposes of legislation to a greater degree "than any legislature had ever answered them in any "country whatever. He would go further, and would "say that the legislature and the system of representa-"tion possessed the full and entire confidence of the "country—deservedly possessed it, and that the dis-"cussions in the legislature had a very great influence "over the opinions of the country. He would go "further still, and say that if at that moment he had "imposed upon him the duty of forming a legislature "for any country, and particularly for a country like "this, possessing great property of various descrip-"tions, he did not mean to assert that he could form such "a legislature as we possessed, for the nature of man "was incapable of reaching such excellence at once, but "his great endeavour would be to form some description "of legislature which would produce the same results."

He was not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of reform himself, but "he would at once "declare that, as far as he was concerned, as long as he "held any station in the Government of the country, he "should always feel it his duty to resist such measures "when proposed by others."

There is no doubt that this language made a great and unpleasant impression within the walls of Parliament; and in the Lower House most of his colleagues who gave any intimation of their opinions on the matter professed a much more guarded and limited opposition to reform than their chief. It is probably a mistake induced by the vehemence of the subsequent excitement on the subject to say that at the time it attracted any marked notice or produced any violent excitement out of doors, for as yet the people in general were very quiescent and indifferent on the subject: still the language thus held by the Duke undoubtedly weakened the Ministry; but, before any formal discussion of the question could take place, other and more trivial events occurred which caused a great sensation in the country; and which, by making the Administration appear, to eyes willing to misconstrue and to misrepresent it, in a somewhat weak and undignified light, hastened its downfall, which otherwise was generally expected to be the result of its uncompromising resistance to Mr. Brougham's motion.

As was usual, the new Sovereign had consented to take the earliest opportunity of paying a formal visit to the City of London, by dining at Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day, the 9th of November. But for two or three days before there had been widely-spread anticipations of an intended riot. We have already seen that the new police, which had been recently introduced into London,

on the model of that body which the Duke himself had established in Dublin many years before, had afforded a mark for the most absurd calumnies; it was also, as might have been expected, very unpopular with those classes with whose lawless pursuits it was designed to interfere. It had been the object of most systematic and violent attacks at the beginning of the week, when the King had gone to open Parliament, and the ministers now received information that it was intended to renew that attack in a more effectual manner. While they were pondering on this information, the Duke himself received a letter from the Lord Mayor elect, suggesting "the propriety of his "coming strongly and sufficiently guarded," because, "from what the writer could learn, it was the intention "of a set of desperate and abandoned characters who "were anxious to avail themselves of any circumstance "to create tumult and confusion, to take the opportunity "of making an attack on the Duke's person on his "approach to the hall." The Duke cared very little about any danger to himself, but a great deal about the preservation of order and tranquillity, especially on such an occasion, and at once decided that his presence should give no pretext for a disturbance, but that he would refrain from attending the banquet; but when he laid the letter he had received before his colleagues, and announced his intention to them, it seemed to them that his absence would not be sufficient to insure order; but, coupling the letter of the Lord Mayor elect with the numerous communications to a similar effect which during the last two days had poured in upon the Home Office from various quarters, they were of opinion that there was so strong a probability of some serious tumult being excited if any pretext for an unusual collection of people should be afforded, that it was their duty to

advise the King to postpone his visit to the City; and Peel accordingly informed the Lord Mayor of this decision by a letter which appeared in the public papers on the 8th.

It was not strange that such an event, which might easily be interpreted as an admission on the part of the ministers that the King's presence in the City might endanger the public peace, should produce great astonishment, and, when coupled with the recollection of the recent scenes in Paris and Brussels, no slight alarm; the funds fell considerably, and there was such general uneasiness that the conduct of the ministers was made the subject of severe comment in both Houses the same night. In the House of Commons, Mr. Brougham made a most energetic speech, treating the Duke himself, as did all the Opposition speakers in both Houses, with great respect; speaking with horror of the threats which had been levelled at him, and expressing for himself a wish that he had not lived to see the day when the errors of the Duke as a statesman ("though even as a statesman he was not without his merits") had caused the rabble to forget "those memorable services in the "field which had made for him, as a soldier, a general, "and a conqueror, a great, a brilliant, and an imperish-"able renown." Penetrated with the importance of the subject, of which he had announced himself the advocate, he overlooked all other circumstances, and traced the Duke's unpopularity to "his fatal declaration against "every species of reform;" but at the same time he expressed his own conviction that the King might have gone "safely to Guildhall, without suffering any incon-"venience save that arising from the pressure occasioned "by the eager wishes of his affectionate and faithful "subjects to behold him, and his regret that a trial had

"not been made of the affection which the people bore "to his Majesty; though," he admitted, "that perhaps "the error, if there had been one, was on the safe side." Peel defended the advice which had been given on the ground of the belief sincerely entertained by the ministers that a formidable attack upon the new police force was intended when the men composing it were gathered together, as of necessity they would be on the occasion of such a procession; and, he added, they had been strengthened in this belief by the determined assaults which had been made in such numbers upon the police only the week before. They had also received sure intelligence that an attack had been designed against the Duke's house in Piccadilly, while the police were absent in the City.

The attack on the Government was fiercer in the House of Lords. The Duke of Richmond led the way, insisting, in reply to a call which Lord Londonderry made on all who possessed property or influence to rally round the Government, that the Government ought first to show that it merited support, and to take care to avoid raising needless alarms. He declared that the terror which had been excited by Peel's letter to the Lord Mayor would extend to the remotest corners of the kingdom; and he was supported by Lord Grey, who, though still preserving the same tone of moderation which had distinguished him in the discussion on the address, nevertheless avowed that he had "felt the "very deepest regret and disappointment, and some- "thing like humiliation, that such a step as the post- "ponement of the King's visit to the City should have "been thought necessary by the Government. The "present was not a moment to spread accounts of public "dangers unnecessarily, when we were engaged in

"difficult, and even doubtful negotiations abroad. Such "an event would not contribute to the success of those "negotiations, nor make foreign powers respect our "Government." At the attacks with which the Duke was menaced he expressed the greatest horror: they were ungenerous, unmanly; and even were he the political enemy of the Duke, which he was not, he would gladly defend him at the hazard of his own life. He thought that the Duke himself was wise to decide on absenting himself from the royal visit to the City; but since even the Lord Mayor gave no intimation that any danger impended over the King, he thought that the advice which had been given to his Majesty had not been justified, but had been adopted without due consideration. More he would not say; but he would also add, that he saw "no foundation whatever for any particular "alarm as to the situation of the country; nothing to "make him regard our domestic peace as likely to be "interrupted." Wellington defended the course which he and his colleagues had adopted with entire success. It was plain that his previous career gave him great advantages in such a case, as no one could possibly imagine that any motive like that of personal fear had had the slightest influence upon his conduct. The most dauntless courage is perfectly compatible with a horror of civil disturbances, on account of the misery which they must inflict upon the innocent, the discredit and mischief which they must cause to the land in which they occur; and he declared, as Peel had done, that besides the Lord Mayor's letter, intimations of intended tumult had been received from so many different and independent quarters that the ministers would have been criminal had they disregarded them. He admitted the evil of postponing the King's visit to the City; but, speaking in

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the interests of peace and order, he declared that he considered anything preferable to the risk of allowing a scene of riot and confusion, which could not fail to terminate in bloodshed, to take place in the presence of the Sovereign. He had not now (and he repeated the statement a day or two afterwards) any doubt that there would have been such confusion and tumult had the procession been allowed to take place; and he maintained, not only that the ministers had been fully justified in the advice which they had given to his Majesty to postpone his visit, but that it had been generally approved of both in London and in the country, and, in fact, that the ministers "were entitled to as much "approbation for it as for any measure adopted by them "in the whole course of their Administration."

In neither House did the Opposition think fit to call for any expression of the opinion of Parliament on the subject, which seems to justify the Duke's assertion that the majority approved of his conduct. And now that all excitement on the subject has passed away, it cannot be denied that the ministers had great grounds to apprehend disturbance if the King had gone in procession to the City; and that certainly, if there were any risk of such disturbance, they would have been in the highest degree culpable if they had preferred endangering the public tranquillity to encountering for themselves the obloquy of giving unpopular, and in the eyes of the ignorant or the heedless, pusillanimous advice.

The first division, however, which did take place in the House of Commons showed how strongly the recent elections had gone against the Ministry, and sealed its fate. The accession of a new Sovereign rendered necessary a fresh settlement of the Civil List, but, when on the 15th of November the ministers proposed, as was usual

in such cases, that the House should resolve itself into a committee on that subject, one of the Whig party, Sir Henry Parnell, moved as an amendment that the question should first be referred to a select committee, that it might inquire what alterations and retrenchments were practicable. Such an amendment was tantamount to a vote of want of confidence in the Ministry; and yet of those who spoke in its support the majority were Tories. But in spite of this unnatural hostility, the ministers were quite confident of success on this point, and probably indulged some expectation that their victory might in some degree weaken their adversaries in the more formidable conflict of the next evening on Brougham's motion for reform. They were strangely deceived, being beaten by a majority of twenty-nine votes in a House of four hundred and forty members. Such a division made it quite plain that a more decisive defeat awaited them on the question of reform; and therefore they wisely and properly resigned their offices next day. The Duke advised the King to consult Lord Grey on the formation of the new Administration, and it is said, with every appearance of truth, also counselled his Majesty to be prepared to approve of a measure of moderate reform, as one which was now inevitable.

Thus fell the Wellington Administration, after it had lasted not quite three years. The unparalleled excitement which prevailed during the next two years on the question of reform prevented due justice from being rendered to it. Yet it cannot be denied to have had considerable merit, and to have done very important service to the country. By its new Corn Law it had opened the door in some degree to free trade, substituting the principle of limited importation for the

previous rule of almost absolute restriction; while by the great measure of the relief of the Roman Catholics, which was wholly due to the resolution and sagacity of the Duke himself, he had laid the foundation-stone of the tranquillity of Ireland; and if the results for which he hoped have not yet been fully realized, partly in consequence of the wickedness of the demagogues in that country, and partly, too, because of the incomplete nature of the measure itself, yet surely that minister is entitled to great praise who braved the displeasure of his King, the alienation of his party, and even the doubts which rendered his own mind anxious, to make a concession which no minister had hitherto had the courage to propose to Parliament, though, with only two or three exceptions* from the time when it was first mooted, every head of an Administration had been convinced both of its expediency and of its justice.

Some important measures of domestic reform had also been carried: the Beer Act, breaking down the monopoly of the brewers, had contributed greatly to the comfort of the poor, especially in the agricultural districts; while the establishment of the new police, instead of the almost useless watchmen, had given the inhabitants of the towns a security to which they had hitherto been strangers. An energetic and stringent economy had been introduced into every branch of the public service, so equitable as to have excited scarcely a single murmur of discontent; yet so effective that, though the Administration which succeeded to office made loud professions of the retrenchments which they were to intro-

* Lord Sidmouth, Mr. Perceval, and Lord Liverpool had been the only Prime Ministers unfavourable to the relief of the Catholics since the time of the American war.

duce, still when they came to examine into the subject as possessors of office, they could not, as the Duke truly asserted some months afterwards,* "find a single six-"pence to be retrenched in the public expenditure; "everything practicable in that way having been already "done by his own Government."† Peace too had been preserved amid great difficulties; though no doubt the Duke's Administration were greatly assisted in their efforts for its preservation by the mere fact of that man being at its head who, of all the men in the world, had least to fear from, and was best able to conduct war.

These were great achievements, and yet to the greatest of them all the Administration, in the opinion of its chief, owed its fall. The advocates of reform attributed it to his "fatal declaration," as they termed it, against any measure of that kind; but he, with greater accuracy, maintained that his language on that subject had had nothing to do with it. Writing to one of his most trusted friends, even when the long-existing excitement was at last allayed by the Reform Bill having passed the House of Lords, and being on the point of becoming the law of the land, he still adhered to this assertion, and pointed to the list of the division on Sir Henry Parnell's motion as a proof of its correctness. It was the carrying of "the Roman Catholic question which," he said, "sepa-"rated the Tories from him; and then the Whigs, "Radicals, and Canningites combined with them in "order to break down his Government." As for his

* See his speech, March 28, 1831.

† Roebuck, in his 'History of the Whig Ministry,' fully admits this. "The administrative, as distinguished from constitutional reforms proposed "by the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, were not only wise in "themselves, but skilfully effected; they were, indeed, step by step, re-"formers, but their progress was steady and uninterrupted."—ii., 350.

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defeat having been effected by the reformers, it was sufficient to say that, in the ensuing spring, "in the division "on the second reading of the Reform Bill, forty-six "members voted against it who had voted against his "Government on the question of the Civil List."*

It would seem that there is great force in this reasoning, and that he does not deserve to be blamed for having deliberately upset his own Administration by a gratuitous declaration against reform. Nor again does it appear that the language which he addressed to the Peers on that subject is fairly liable to the charge made against it, as having betrayed an utter want of the most indispensable quality in a statesman, an acquaintance with the opinions and feelings of the people, who had hitherto been very apathetic on the subject. Three years earlier, Lord Althorp, the leader of the Whigs in the House of Commons, had told Peel that the people had become so indifferent to reform that he never intended to bring forward the question again.† In the last seven years only fourteen petitions had been presented to Parliament in favour of such a measure; and we have the admission of one of the most uncompromising reformers, that even when the excitement on the question was at its height, "what appeared to be the "spontaneous result of popular feeling was in fact "brought about by the incessant labours of a few in-"dustrious and shrewd partisans, forming a secret but "very active and efficient committee in London."‡

The Duke then is hardly to be blamed for failing to foresee the organization of such a committee, and no

* See his letter to Sir John Malcolm, dated June 5, 1832.—Malcolm's 'Life,' ii. 565.

† Speech of Sir R. Peel in 1832, quoted by Roebuck.—'History of the Whig Ministry,' i, 208.

‡ Roebuck, ii., 309.

one could have anticipated the extent to which it would be able to excite to frenzy the usually sober people of England. We may well believe that Lord Grey was equally blind, and that could he have had revealed to him the riots at Bristol and at Nottingham, the insults offered to his King by the mob, and the seditious and dangerous language and conduct into which some even of his brother Peers* allowed themselves to be betrayed, he too would have thought reform dearly purchased at the price of scenes bringing so much discredit and danger on the kingdom; and, though urged by different motives, would have been more likely to range himself by the side of the Duke than by that of his opponents. That the Duke's resistance to even such moderate reform as was contained in the transfer of the seats from places disfranchised for corruption to towns such as Manchester and Birmingham, was not only impolitic, but that it evinced a singular insensibility to the altered circumstances of the country and the requirements of the age, cannot be denied; and it must be regretted by his admirers, although it may no doubt be explained by his past career, the glories of which had been gained by him while combating the revolutionary party on the Continent; and by his experience of the selfish profligacy and utter dishonesty and incapacity of the Spanish reformers. In other respects his government of the country, marked as it was by the successful prosecutions of some legislative measures of great justice, great public benefit, and great difficulty, and by an unceasing progress in administrative improvement, which contributes far more to the general welfare of a people

* Lord Milton (the late Earl Fitzwilliam) declared that he would resist the payment of taxes till the Reform Bill was carried.

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than any amount of organic or constitutional reform, was abundantly entitled to the grateful praise of the nation; nor, had it not been for his continued resistance to reform, which, in the frenzied times that succeeded, made every insult to him and to his followers appear to the multitude an act of patriotic public spirit, would that praise have been denied to him.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The Ministry resign—Lord Grey becomes Prime Minister—The first Reform Bill is introduced—The Duke's Speeches on the subject—Ministers are defeated on General Gascoigne's Amendment, and dissolve Parliament.

THE day after the Ministry had been thus defeated by Sir Henry Parnell, the Duke announced to the Peers that the King had accepted the resignation of himself and his colleagues, and that they only held office till their successors should be appointed.

We are now to view him for many years in a new character, as the leader of the Opposition; and, by the confession even of the ministers whose measures he was resisting, no one ever filled that difficult post with more credit to himself in respect of the uniform candour and fairness which he exhibited towards them while filled with an alarm which he never concealed at their measures and their principles. It is a severe reproach to our parliamentary system that such conduct should have excited admiration by its rarity. And yet such conduct has been very rare. In the affairs of ordinary life, prosperity is said to try the disposition more shrewdly than adversity; but in politics the case is different, and in most instances nothing has been found to pervert the

judgment and principles of men generally honourable and patriotic like the loss of office. Charles Fox, when one of his friends was almost reproving him for the candour with which while in office he met the objections and made allowance for the motives of his antagonists, had bidden his panegyrist wait till he should be in opposition, and then he would prove as factious as could possibly be desired. And the principle which he thus expressed has been adopted as a kind of heir-loom (if not in their professions, at all events in their practice) by more than one of his successors. But all party-trick and manœuvre, all subterfuge and artifice, everything in short which could for a moment raise a suspicion that the object alleged was not the object intended, was far beneath the honest and magnanimous mind of the great man whose character these volumes are designed to portray. On no occasion has party spirit ever run so high as during the debates on the reform question. No measure has ever been brought forward, the promoters of which by their conduct during its progress (for their second Bill was widely different from their first, their third from their second; and all were incomparably more sweeping than that which the Chancellor had designed to propose while out of office), gave more room for cavil, for plausible objection, for irresistible refutation. Nor did any opponent of any measure ever feel more sincere alarm, both at its principles and its results, than the Duke of Wellington felt at those of the Reform Bill, whether as first proposed or as ultimately carried. Yet the intensity of his feelings on this subject did in no respect warp his conduct. We have the admission of its greatest advocate that "his "behaviour during the whole of the debates in both "sessions upon that measure was exemplary. Opposing

"it to the utmost of his power no one could charge "him with making the least approach to factious violence, "or with ever taking an unfair advantage."* The cause of this conduct, so unusual in a defeated minister, was that he never sought his own advantage, but only the promotion of the cause of truth, and of the interests of his country. And he had his reward, not only in the love and reverence of his countrymen in general to a degree perfectly unexampled, but also in the deeply-felt and frankly-acknowledged respect of those to whom he was most opposed, with the exception of one or two base men as incapable of appreciating uprightness in others as of exhibiting it in their own conduct.

In less than a week the new Cabinet was formed; and the most remarkable thing in it, as a Ministry professedly formed in the interests of the people, was the almost entire exclusion of Commoners from its principal posts. Sir James Graham, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Charles Grant, who was afterwards made Lord Glenelg, were the only members unconnected with the peerage. Lord Grey became the Prime Minister, and he was forced very reluctantly to entrust the Great Seal to Lord Brougham, who, if his own assertion may be implicitly credited, was not much better pleased to receive it. Lord Lansdowne was President of the Council; Lord Durham, a son-in-law of Lord Grey, a man of considerable ability but of extreme opinions, became Lord Privy Seal. Besides Mr. Grant, three others of Canning's adherents, Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Goderich, accepted the Seals of the Home, the Foreign, and the Colonial Office. Lord Althorp was Chancellor of the Exchequer;

* Lord Brougham, 'Sketches of Statesmen of the Time of George III.,' ii., 359.

and the Duke of Richmond, though a high Tory, revenged himself for the Roman Catholic Relief Bill by entering the Whig Ministry as Postmaster-General. Lord Wellesley gave in his adhesion by accepting a place in the Household as Lord Steward; and two offices which did not give seats in the Cabinet, that of Paymaster of the Forces, and that of Chief Secretary for Ireland, were occupied by two men whose energy and capacity soon raised them in the public estimation above many of their brethren in the Cabinet—Lord John Russell and Mr. Stanley; while Lord Anglesey went back to Ireland.

On the 22nd of November the new Administration met Parliament, and Lord Grey delivered an elaborate exposition of the views with which he had taken office. They may be summed up in a few words. The maintenance of peace abroad; a stringent and severe economy; and parliamentary reform at home. And with respect to this last question, his language was studiously guarded. In one respect his opinion on it resembled that which Wellington had expressed with regard to the relief of the Roman Catholics, that it was a matter which could only be taken up and settled satisfactorily by the Government; and while he expressed his resolution "to stand upon the true principles of the Con-"stitution," he admitted it to be "a task of no slight "difficulty to fix the principle on which reform should "be regulated, and one which would require much "time and consideration;" and, with express reference to the extreme measures which were hinted at even in that House by some of his supporters, he avowed his own object to be "to reform so as to preserve, and not "so as to overthrow."

The Duke took no part in this discussion, but before

the end of the month he gave a practical proof of the entire inconsistency of all factious opposition with his disposition, by resisting a motion made and chiefly supported by Tories for a committee to inquire into the distress of the country, expressly on the ground that "it was not just to the ministers who had so recently "come into office to involve them in such difficulties" as those in which so extensive an inquiry as was desired by the proposers of the committee must entangle them. He affirmed truly, that "the causes of the distressed con-"dition of certain districts were beyond the reach and "control of any Government;" but, at the same time, he indignantly vindicated his own Administration from the reproaches which Lord Radnor had made against it, maintaining that "he and his colleagues had gone as "far as they constitutionally could go with a view to "remedy the distress, and that they had in no respect "neglected their duty." And he denied that, as it had been asserted, that distress "had originated in any por-"tion of their policy;" but he traced it to "different "causes, among which the example, he would unhesi-"tatingly say the bad example afforded by neighbour-"ing States had been the most influential as it had "been the most pernicious." He pointed triumphantly to the fact, that in the very last session of Parliament his Ministry had taken off nearly 4,000,000*l.* of taxes, and asserted that "since then the commercial and "manufacturing interests of the country generally had "been in a state of prosperity and tranquillity, except "in those districts where there had been gross and "disgraceful disturbances; which, however, he trusted "were but local and temporary."

This statement was rather different from the language which Lord Grey had held the week before, when he

affirmed that he and his colleagues had "succeeded to "the administration of affairs in a season of unparalleled "difficulty;" but it was so fully borne out by the fact that, as the Duke stated, "the revenue was improving, "and the consumption of and demand for our manu- "factures was steadily increasing," that no answer was attempted to be made to it; and his detractors, by their silence, admitted that further attacks upon the economical policy of an Administration, which during so short a tenure of office had afforded such extensive relief to the poorer classes, were vain as a means of offence, and were discreditable only to those who made them.

Parliament was adjourned, as usual, over Christmas, and met again in February. During the recess, the ministers had devoted their chief attention to the arrangement of the details of the Reform Bill which they designed to bring forward; and by a very singular arrangement they entrusted the conduct of it to Lord John Russell, who was not a member of the Cabinet, but who, on the 1st of March, introduced it into the House of Commons. Till its introduction, the most careful secrecy had been observed with respect to its provisions; and it was generally believed that a very moderate and limited measure was contemplated, as agreeable both to the wishes of the chief of the Cabinet, and to the judgment of the majority of his colleagues. But in this movement, as in most others, the prudent and the cautious were overborne by the more violent and headstrong, and the Bill that was now introduced struck not only its opponents with dismay, but even the majority of the supporters of the Government with amazement. The ministers did not bring in one uniform Bill to regulate the representation of the United Kingdom, which would have been the most reasonable and

desirable arrangement; but they proposed separate and independent measures for England, Ireland, and Scotland. The English Bill, by its leading provisions, wholly disfranchised sixty boroughs, and deprived forty-seven more of one of their members. It created thirteen new boroughs to return two, and eighteen to return one member, and altered the boundaries of several more. Twenty-six counties, each of which had hitherto returned two members, were for the future to send four; while each Riding of Yorkshire was to return two. The diminution of members in England thus effected was intended to be very considerable, and as the additional representatives to be given to Ireland and Scotland only amounted to eight, the number of the entire House of Commons was to be reduced by sixty-two, or nearly one-tenth. Very considerable changes were also to be effected in the constituencies. Freeholders were to continue to enjoy their ancient rights; and besides them, all copyholders of estates worth ten pounds a year, and all holders of property worth fifty pounds a year under leases of twenty-one years and upwards, were to be entitled to vote at county elections; while in the boroughs the exclusive rights of corporations, wherever they had existed, were abolished, and every one who paid rates for a house of the yearly value of ten pounds was to have the right of suffrage. There were other enactments, saving their existing rights to the present generation; and some also calculated to diminish the great expense of elections by greatly abridging the time during which the poll might be kept open, and by the establishment of courts to revise the list of voters once each year, so as to take away some of the grounds on which election petitions had been wont to be founded.

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Many of these provisions, and especially those last mentioned, were wise, just, and calculated to be highly beneficial to all classes, to candidates as well as to voters. Nor could satisfactory objection be made to the grant of the privilege of returning representatives to such populous and important towns as Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, and others, which were now, for the first time, to receive it. Nor, again, though they had practically been useful members of this constituent body, was it easy to defend, on abstract principles, any maintenance of the electoral rights of such boroughs as Gatton or Old Sarum. But still, the unexpectedly comprehensive character of the Bill, the amazing extent to which, destroying, as it proposed to destroy, almost one-fourth of all the seats held by members of the existing Parliament, and the alteration of the franchise, which it was easily foreseen would greatly change the character of the constituencies, especially in the towns, were circumstances well calculated to cause uneasiness in the minds of most men. Indeed, so aware were even the ministers themselves of the extent to which they were outrunning the popular expectation, and the general feeling, that the ablest* among them considered that if, on its first introduction, Peel, as the head of the Opposition, should decline to take such a measure into consideration at all, but should content himself with denouncing it as a revolutionary proposal of utter insanity, he would carry the House with him, and procure its instant rejection; and some of his followers urged him to adopt such a course.† Peel, however, was not a very skilful parliamentary tactician, and he

* Lord Brougham, see Roebuck, ii., 87. See also Lord Althorp's speech on the third reading of the second Reform Bill.

† Especially Mr. Croker.

probably had by this time learnt the impossibility of resisting reform altogether; he may have felt, as the Duke would certainly have felt, that it would not be respectful to the King to refuse to consider for a moment a measure for the introduction of which the ministers ostentatiously, and not very properly, proclaimed that they had his Majesty's sanction; and he took the more decorous and statesmanlike course of discussing it as he would have discussed any other proposal. It is not, however, the province of such a work as this to relate the history of even so important a measure as the Reform Bill, except as far as the Duke of Wellington himself was concerned in it, and as far as the circumstances of its progress, of his long opposition to it, and of his eventual withdrawal of that opposition, tend to throw a light on his general views of politics, and on his personal character. His objections to reform in the abstract were, as was natural, greatly strengthened by the sweeping character of the measure which had been introduced. He remembered the Spanish Constitution of 1812, which he had so vehemently and sagaciously denounced as having been framed on the principle that a painter painted a picture, to be looked at, and he entertained a decided opinion that the measure now proposed by the Government would, if carried, prove equally incapable of being worked in any consistent or useful manner. The Bill now introduced never reached the House of Lords, having passed its second reading in the Commons by a majority of only a single vote, and having been defeated the week afterwards in one of its leading principles by an amendment condemning any diminution of the existing number of the representatives of the people, which was moved by General Gascoigne, one of the members for

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Liverpool, and was supported, not very wisely, by the Tories, in the hope of thus getting rid of the Bill altogether. But several incidental discussions took place among the Peers on the presentation of petitions, and on motions for various returns, in two of which, at the end of March, the Duke, though deprecating such discussions as inconvenient and necessarily unsatisfactory, nevertheless took occasion to reaffirm his opinion that there was "no reason whatever for altering the constitution of Par-"liament;" and at the same time to express a more particular disapprobation of and alarm at the present Bill, as one "which would alter every interest existing in "the country; which must be followed by a total change "of the whole system of Government;" and he asked how the ministers themselves expected that the King's Government could be carried on if it should become the law of the land. He declared that his objections to it were dictated by no personal interest, since he had no borough influence or property of that kind to be destroyed; but that, having served his King and country for nearly half a century in the command of armies, in councils, and embassies, and in many different countries, the experience which he had acquired in all these various employments filled him with "the most serious appre-"hensions that from the period of its adoption would "date the downfall of the Constitution."

His first speech, though full of matter, was short, and no reply of any consequence was made to it at the moment; but a day or two afterwards his language on this occasion, and his original declaration on the subject while in office, were commented on in a manner which drew from him a fuller exposition of his sentiments. Lord Wharncliffe made a motion for some returns of population a vehicle for a vehement attack on the Government Bill,

which he hoped to render the more damaging by avowing, as the organ of a considerable party, that his hostility was directed against the particular measure now proposed, and not against reform in general, of the necessity of which he professed himself convinced; and he blamed his Tory friends in general for their conduct on the subject, attributing the present eagerness for reform to their impolitic refusal to enfranchise towns of such importance as Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham; nor did he spare the Duke for his declaration of the preceding November, which he affirmed had made it impossible for him to retain office, but had placed Lord Grey in power under circumstances which made the demand for reform irresistible. Lord Durham followed in Lord Wharncliffe's wake, also attacking the Duke for his declaration, which he affirmed had convinced even his own colleagues that he could not any longer carry on the Government with safety. Lord Brougham re-echoed the sentiments of the preceding speakers with respect to the Duke's language on the subject, which he affirmed had grieved him more than anything he ever remembered; and, while repeating his panegyric on his military services, and his acknowledgment of the everlasting gratitude which the country owed him, lamented that he had not seen the wisdom of yielding to what he must have seen was the general wish of the country; which at last he excited himself into declaring to be in favour not only of reform in the abstract, but especially of the ministerial Bill; and he warned Wellington that his own followers were far from being unanimous in their objections to it.

The Duke defended himself with great vigour; though when he declared his opinion that Parliament had no more right to deprive boroughs which then returned

representatives "of their franchise without delinquency "being proved against them, than it had to deprive him "of his seat in that House or of his title, or Lord "Brougham of his estate;" he advanced a doctrine which was certainly not maintainable, either on any proper theory of the Constitution or on any of the practical grounds on which those franchises had been originally granted. Nor was he very consistent with so peremptory an argument when he admitted "that there "were circumstances of necessity which might get rid of "this strict letter of the law, though no such had been "made out in this case," since it is impossible to conceive any circumstances which would warrant the depriving any possessor of his title or estate without adequate compensation. He carried his hearers with him far more when he pointed out the inconsistency of some of the arguments of Lord Brougham and other advocates of the ministerial measure, with their admission that "they would have preferred to keep some of "the rotten boroughs in the place of other boroughs;" and when he contended that the main object to be kept in view was the formation of a House of Commons which should do good service to the people whom it represented, and dwelt upon the great legislative excellence which the House of Commons, as then constituted, had displayed since the restoration of peace. Nor did he limit his views to so brief a period. He went back to the Revolution of 1688, and affirmed that since that era "the public service in the House of Commons had "been carried on by persons of talent, property, and "knowledge—scientific, political, commercial, and manu-"facturing; men connected with, or representing all "the great interests of their country; men noted for "great abilities; who had on all occasions been a Con-

" servative* party in the State; who had supported the
" peace and glory of the country in war, and had pro-
" moted her prosperity in peace during the last hundred
" and forty years." He contended that, " if the country
" were destined to lose such a Parliament, ministers were
" bound to see that their new system should be such as
" should secure for the King's Government the support
" of a Parliament formed upon their new principle;"
and he quoted an admission made by Lord Grey himself
as far back as 1817, that " the House of Commons had
" always shown itself ready to attend to the wishes of
" the people."

Proceeding to examine the provisions of the Bill, he expressed his expectation that the clause which gave copyholders and fifty-pound leaseholders votes for the counties, would thus form a greatly preponderating addition to the constituencies, while, since the voters so qualified in the different unrepresented towns would be principally shopkeepers, they would form a constituency hardly " fit to be the only electors to return county
" members to a Parliament which should govern the
" affairs of this great nation." Moreover, he argued that, " however respectable that or any other class of
" electors might be, there was a strong reason against
" any uniformity of system in the representation of the
" country. He had already heard," he said, " of the
" establishment in the metropolis of a committee formed
" for the purpose of recommending candidates to the
" different towns throughout the country;" and he warned the Peers that such a committee was " highly
" dangerous;" and that " such associations had been

* This is perhaps the first application to party politics of the word Conservative, which has since been adopted by the whole Tory party as descriptive of their views under the new state of affairs established by the Reform Bill.

"found effectual in other countries to put down the "Government:" while it was plain, he argued, that the power of such a committee must depend principally upon the establishment of a uniform system of election, such as was intended by the Government Bill. He fortified his argument by a reference to the law of elections which was passed in France while he was in command of the army of occupation; reminding the Peers how frequently the French Government had been forced to alter that law; and how, in spite of all its alterations, it had resulted "in the formation of a Par-"liament, the spirit of which had rendered it impossible "for any Government to act in that country." He declared that he had had "no communication whatever "with Prince Polignac," and that it was not his intention, as it was not his business, to defend that statesman's Government; but he felt forced "to say that "things had been brought to that state in France, that "it was impossible that there should not be a revolu-"tion; and when he saw a similar principle of election "recommended in this country, he thought that we "must incur considerable danger, and that the country "would be placed in that situation that no minister "would be able to feel certain that any one measure "which he might bring forward would succeed, or that "he would be able to carry on the Government. The "circumstances of France and England were in so many "particulars alike, that we ought to take warning by "the dangers of the neighbouring country. A Parlia-"ment constructed on the new plan proposed by the "Reform Bill would," he maintained, "be too strong "for the Government, which would no longer be able to "carry out its own views in matters affecting commerce "and manufactures." And he also greatly doubted

"how far it would be able to maintain the integrity of "the Church establishment, though that was guaranteed "not only by the King's coronation oath, but also by "the acts of union with Scotland and Ireland." The plan now proposed he asserted involved an entire alteration of the Constitution. If it should be carried, "he "did not say that the Crown could not be preserved; "but the King's power would be limited and confined "to the management of the army, navy, and other "details; and that would not be the English Consti- "tution: the country could no longer go on as before: "it would not be the same England." He declared that he spoke under an overwhelming sense of duty; that "he regretted being compelled to differ from many "of his political friends" on the question, and that "he "had no desire for anything but to be useful for the "service of the public in any way that might be "required. And he had delivered his opinions, un- "influenced by any personal reasons whatever, broadly "and openly with a view to the country's benefiting by "their expression."

He then referred to his own conduct as minister, and contended that there was no analogy between the circumstances under which the present Bill was proposed and those under which he brought forward his measure for the relief of the Roman Catholics; for then "the "expediency of the case was clearly made out, while "he could not admit that it had been demonstrated "now." Nor, though he admitted that there was "a "growing wish for parliamentary reform in the country, "did he doubt that, if the question were fairly discussed "in Parliament, and if, after a fair hearing of the case, "Parliament should decide against it, the country would "submit without a murmur." But with respect to the

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removal of the disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics, the case, in one part of the United Kingdom, was widely different. He firmly believed that civil war in Ireland would have been "the consequence of continuing to "refuse the settlement of that question;" and, holding that opinion, "he maintained that he should have been "wanting in his duty, both as a man and as a minister, "had he hesitated to give up his former views with "regard to that measure. Nor did he regret his con- "duct, though it had lost him the confidence of many "of his former friends." To that alienation of them, and to a consequent combination of parties against his Government, he attributed his own loss of power, and not to his resistance to reform; though he admitted that it was true that, after having been defeated in the House of Commons on the question of the Civil List, he naturally expected a similar defeat on Mr. Brougham's motion for reform; and that he resigned, when he did resign, to avoid a defeat on that subject. On all other matters he maintained that his practice had been in complete harmony with the professions of the existing Administration. On first taking office they had been loud in promises of retrenchment; but their investigations on the subject had shown them that he had left them nothing to retrench. Peace, too, he had preserved, and was so anxious to see it preserved still, that though he differed with Lord Grey in some particulars of his conduct of foreign affairs, yet he constantly discouraged all present discussion upon them, "because no "man desired more than he did the prosperity of the "Noble Earl's Government, not from any peculiar at- "tachment to the Noble Earl himself, but from the love "which he bore to his country."

The assertion which he made in this speech, and

which he repeated on more than one subsequent occasion, that his resignation of office was not the consequence of his declaration of hostility to reform, and that it had no immediate connection with the reform question, has been greatly cavilled at, as inconsistent not only with the fact, but also with his own admission that he had resigned before Mr. Brougham's motion could come in, because he anticipated a second defeat upon that motion. Yet, as has been already stated, there are many circumstances which may be adduced in support of the opinion which he thus steadily maintained. In a speech which he delivered in the autumn of this year,* he also expressed a belief that if the debate on reform had come before the division on the Civil List, the Government would have been supported by a majority in their resistance to Brougham's motion; though, when the weakness of the Government was once proclaimed by their first defeat, no such result could any longer be expected. And no one who is conversant with the nature of parliamentary majorities, and who recollects that, as the Duke truly stated, very many members voted against the Ministry on Sir Henry Parnell's motion who subsequently voted against the Reform Bill, will deny that there is no great improbability that this view of the case may have been correct. Moreover, the elections, which had been so unfavourable to his Ministry, that it was generally reckoned before Parliament met at all that he had lost fifty seats, could not possibly have been influenced by a declaration which no one knew that he designed to make. Not that the correctness or incorrectness of this opinion of the Duke's was of any substantial consequence, or that it in the least affected the question of the merits of the Reform Bill; nor would

* October 4, on the second reading of the second Reform Bill.

it have been worth noticing had it not been for the strange pertinacity with which the ministers and their supporters pressed their denial of it, as if, in spite of their constant professions of respect for him and gratitude for his services, they desired in reality, by holding him up as an enemy to reform, to cause those services to be forgotten, and to gain some apparent strength to their cause by casting odium on its noblest antagonist.

In fact, circumstances did not afford nearly so strong a contradiction to his words as they did to the language of the Lord Chancellor, when he affirmed that nearly all people were unanimous in favour of the ministerial Bill; for when, about three weeks after the last-mentioned debate in the House of Lords, it had been defeated in one of its most important principles, and when the Parliament had in consequence been dissolved, and the ministers introduced a new Bill to the new Parliament, they showed how far they were themselves from being unanimously in favour of their own measure as originally framed, by the very great alterations which they made in it before they again brought it forward; and also by the still more extensive modifications of it which, though generally supported by an overpowering majority in the House of Commons, they introduced into their third Bill, in order to render it acceptable to the thinking portion of their opponents, whether in or out of Parliament.

It was on the 18th of April that General Gascoigne's amendment was carried in the House of Commons, and on the 22nd, the ministers, after a scene of peremptory coaxing, and courtly, though scarcely disguised menace, which has been comically described by the historian of the Ministry on the authority of the chief actor in

the occurrence,* persuaded his Majesty to go down to Westminster at once, and dissolve the Parliament,—a step which produced the greatest excitement in both Houses the moment that it was known to be impending, and which the Lord Chancellor, with even more than his usual recklessness of assertion, justified by accusing the House of Commons of having refused the supplies; a statement which, though wholly without foundation, as it was afterwards admitted to be, was of great service to his party at the subsequent elections, by exasperating the people in many places against the members of the Opposition, whom they believed on such apparently high authority to have been guilty of such unprecedented and scarcely loyal conduct.

* Roebuck, ii., 149, who implies that he has received the account which he gives from Lord Brougham, then Lord Chancellor.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Death of the Duchess of Wellington—Opening of the new Parliament—The Second Reform Bill—Prince Leopold is made King of Belgium—Wellington urges the recognition of Don Miguel—His speech against the Reform Bill.

IF the first Reform Bill had been brought up to the House of Lords, the Duke of Wellington would have been prevented from bearing his part in its discussions; for three days after the dissolution of Parliament the Duchess died at Apsley House, after a brief illness, from which, till within a day or two of her death, no immediate danger had been apprehended. She had been a lady of great beauty and accomplishments, and had done the honours of his house with eminent grace and dignity; but the Duke had been rather a kind and high-bred than an uxorious and devoted husband. His natural disposition inclined him to the sterner business of active life rather than to gentle dalliance, for which he had not even much sympathy; since, in one of his earlier Peninsular despatches, we find him speaking, with reference to the conduct of one of his most distinguished officers, in a tone of regretful wonder at the influence which women had over even sensible men.

He himself was a Hercules whom no Omphale could enslave, and if we should think, as perhaps some may think, that his character would have been more amiable and attractive had there been in it some infusion of the softer qualities of the heart, we must remember that absolute universal excellence has never yet been granted to humanity, and mildly construe an imperfection which arose from, or contributed to an unwearied and glorious performance of some of the most momentous duties that have ever been imposed upon any man at the most critical period of the world's history.

The new elections were conducted with great violence all over the country; and, indeed, before they commenced a foretaste was given of the extent to which the populace had been excited on the subject of reform, by some rather formidable riots which took place in London the week after the dissolution. The Lord Mayor had very improperly sanctioned an illumination in token of the joy felt by the Reformers at that act; and the mob, collected in vast numbers, paraded the streets, breaking the windows, and doing terrible damage to the houses of the most prominent anti-Reformers, till they reached Apsley House, which for some time was the object of an attack more deliberately organized and more stubbornly carried on; the rioters not being deterred from their attempts to force the gates by the servants from within firing over their heads, but pressing on their assault with the most formidable violence, till at last the police shamed them into its abandonment by telling them that at that moment the corpse of the Duchess was lying unburied in the house. Nor was this the worst; in many counties political unions were formed, the members of which openly proclaimed their

intention of marching upon London in order by force to compel its opponents to consent to the Bill, if milder arguments should prove ineffectual; and which already exercised so completely organized and so general an intimidation over the whole kingdom, that many of the intended candidates for seats among the opponents of reform were afraid to offer themselves, and those who wished to support such as did stand, in many places dared not for their lives record a vote in their favour. Under such circumstances it was not wonderful that a vast majority of the new House of Commons was pledged to support the ministers and their Bill, and that from the beginning of the session it was understood by both parties that all opposition in that House would be wholly fruitless.

The certainty, however, of the issue did not cause the conflict to be the less resolutely maintained, and it was carried on on both sides with a bitterness of which, for the honour of the English legislation, it is well that no other example can be produced since the Restoration. Parliament was opened on the 21st of June by the King in person, with a speech in which a recommendation to make a reform in the representation the subject of its earliest and most attentive consideration occupied the very first paragraph; and three days afterwards Lord John Russell laid upon the table of the House of Commons the second Reform Bill, altered in some important points from that submitted to the last Parliament, and especially by an entire remodelling of the lists of new seats to be created, out of deference to the principle asserted in General Gascoigne's amendment, and by a clause giving votes for counties to holders of leases for seven years, who paid fifty pounds as rent. The second reading of the

Bill was carried by a very large majority on the 6th of July, but above two months were occupied by the discussion of its details in committee, for which the flagrant partiality with which the schedule of boroughs to be disfranchised was made out so as to favour some which were in the hands of Whigs, and to include others of which the chief offence was that the influence of some Tory Peer predominated in them, gave abundant grounds; as did the adoption by the ministers of the Census of 1821 as the foundation of their Bill, though that of 1831 was on the point of completion, and would, as was well known, raise many places intended to be wholly or partially disfranchised, as containing less than two thousand or four thousand inhabitants, above the line which had been selected as the criterion by which to determine the right of allowing any borough any longer to return representatives to Parliament. On these points, however, the ministers carried their proposals, but they were less successful in resisting an amendment moved by the Marquess of Chandos, which gave votes to all yearly tenants who paid a rent of fifty pounds; and with this alteration on the 19th of September the Bill was sent up to the House of Lords. Not that the ministers in that House enjoyed a respite while the Commons were thus occupied; on the contrary, from the first day of the session they were subjected to a very searching investigation of their foreign policy, in which Wellington took a prominent part, showing, as might have been expected, a far more thorough acquaintance with the affairs of Europe than was possessed by the new Foreign Secretary, and with great success justifying the policy which his own Administration had pursued, and contrasting it with that of his successors to their manifest disad-

vantage. The affairs which excited the most interest at the time were those of Belgium and Portugal, with respect to each of which kingdoms France, though now under the dominion of a prince who made the most ostentatious professions of a peaceful policy, was displaying all her ancient spirit of aggression.

On the 1st of June, Belgium had chosen Prince Leopold, the widower of our Princess Charlotte, for their king; and as the conditions to which the King of Holland had formally consented to submit were violated in several particulars, and especially by the claim made by the new Sovereign to the Duchy of Luxembourg, the King of the Netherlands refused to acquiesce in the arrangement, and at the beginning of August declared war against Belgium. Leopold, who had already been won over by France to consent to the demolition of the fortresses on his northern frontier, now applied to that power for aid; and France gave it eagerly, sending a considerable force to Brussels, and lending him four hundred French officers to officer his own army, though requiring that they should continue to wear their national uniform. After a few days the exertions of the French and English ambassadors produced an accommodation, in consequence of which the French army returned to its own territory, but the French officers who had been lent to the Belgian army remained with it.

At the same time, or, to speak strictly, a few weeks before, on the plea that some French subjects had sustained injuries from the existing Government of Portugal, the French Ministry, having obtained the acquiescence of our Government, sent a squadron to the Tagus, which fired upon the forts at the mouth of the river, and carried off in triumph to Brest the Portuguese fleet, which neither made nor attempted any resistance;

and in the speech with which Louis Philippe opened the Chambers on the 23rd of July, he announced with exultation that "the Portuguese men-of-war were in his "power, and that the tri-coloured flag floated on the "walls of Lisbon."

Such an event could not pass unnoticed in the British Parliament. In the comments made upon it, Lord Aberdeen, as having been the Foreign Minister in the Duke's Cabinet, took the lead, expressing his concern at the doubtful language which the King's speech held in regard to the prospect of Continental peace; his doubts whether the ostentatious manner in which the present Administration had proclaimed their intention to preserve that inestimable blessing was really the best way to secure it; and his feeling that its preservation was materially endangered by the removal from office of the Duke, who had possessed peculiar facilities for maintaining it through his influence with foreign powers; an influence which Lord Aberdeen truly described as being peculiar to himself, and scarcely inferior as a pacific statesman to that which he had formerly enjoyed when at the head of his armies. And he ridiculed very successfully the conditions which the Government had attached to its maintenance of the policy of non-interference, namely, "that the security of "neighbouring states should not be endangered;" as if allegations of danger, real or imaginary, had not been the invariable plea for interference; since no nation had ever, of late years at least, interfered in the affairs of another avowedly for its own objects. He showed how greatly France had interfered in Belgium, overruling the choice of a king which the Belgians were prepared to make with the approval of the other chief powers of Europe, and encouraging them to refuse

their adhesion to the conditions on which those powers had agreed as reasonable articles of separation between Belgium and Holland. He showed also what active preparations France was making for an attack upon Portugal on the most flimsy pretexts; and the danger which must ensue to the peace of Europe in general if such an attack should take place; a danger which we were taking no steps to avert by recognizing the prince who, with the evident approval of the nation in general, was exercising the supreme authority in that country. Lord Grey made but a feeble reply, denying Wellington's success as a negotiator, but being forced to go back for an instance of his failure to the treaties of Vienna in 1815, which, he maintained, though having for their object the settlement of Europe, had sown "the seeds "of all the distractions and changes which had taken "place every year since those treaties had been con-"cluded." And he asked, with what he evidently conceived to be an irresistible retort, why, as Lord Aberdeen now blamed him for not recognizing Don Miguel, he had not done so himself while he held the seals of office. His language on the subject called up the Duke, who in several speeches, delivered on different occasions during the ensuing three months, set the affairs of both countries in the proper light, and gave an admirable exposition of the policy which had been pursued, contrasted with that which should have been adopted, of his reasons for his own conduct while in office, and of his feelings of sorrow, alarm, and in one instance of indignation at that pursued by the present Administration.

The French King had spoken to his Chamber in exulting terms of the promised demolition of the fortresses on the Belgian frontier, which he absurdly declared to have been "erected to threaten France, and not to

"protect Belgium," as if, under any conceivable circumstances, Belgium could ever have been in a condition to attack France; and he had vaunted the importance of the friendship of France to the new kingdom as the chief security for its independence. But Wellington had an easy task when he set before the Peers the entire departure from the former policy of England and of Europe made by Lord Grey's Ministry, when it acquiesced in the measures on which the French Monarch dwelt so triumphantly. He reminded them that our uninterrupted aim for above a century and a half had been to keep Belgium independent of France; that this had been the main inducement to the powers negotiating at Vienna in 1814 to unite it to Holland; and that the fortresses now to be destroyed with our sanction had been erected then at the joint expense of Austria, Russia, Prussia, and ourselves, as well as Holland, in order to form a barrier against the ambition of France, which all the statesmen of that time "considered essential to "the security of the north of Europe." In these fortresses he naturally took a peculiar interest, as having been originally employed to superintend their erection and maintenance, and looking upon himself as still in some degree charged with that duty; a view of his own position which had already led him privately to put the Government in possession of full information respecting them. And he very reasonably argued, from the history of their original construction, that France had no possible right to offer any suggestion whatever having any reference to them, much less to complain of their existence, and to demand their destruction. He was as desirous as any one to see peace established between Holland and Belgium, but he maintained that we could only further that object by our friendly influence with

the Government of Holland, and that influence our present Government had thrown away by the complete disregard which we had shown to the interests of Holland while furthering the settlement of the new kingdom. The Duchy of Luxembourg, he reminded the House, had been positively guaranteed to Holland in the autumn of the preceding year by all the powers who then took part in the negotiations concerning the separation of the two countries; and yet, while we were consenting to break that guarantee in some important point, we were doing it so clumsily that we secured for ourselves no influence at the Court of Brussels, but suffered that Government to fall entirely under the control of France.

He justified the King of Holland for breaking off the armistice and declaring war against Belgium; but showed at the same time that even then we could have prevented the commencement of hostilities, and consequently any necessity for the entrance of a French army into the Belgian territory, had not Lord Palmerston, by a most extraordinary negligence, left the despatch from the King containing a notice of his intentions unopened for four-and-twenty hours. He maintained that the result of our conduct had been to reduce King Leopold to a state "little better than that of a prefect of France." And though he expressed the greatest confidence in the uprightness and good faith of Prince Talleyrand, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, in all his dealings with other countries, he declared that he could not view without apprehension the tone assumed by France, which, sanctioned as it now was by us, must render any real independence of Belgium wholly impossible. In Portugal, too, the ambitious designs of France were equally apparent, and our acquiescence in

them was still more discreditable to us, from the peculiar intimacy of the alliance which had so long subsisted between us and the court of Lisbon. It was not long since Canning had made his noble boast that the flag of England, planted on her well-known heights, could secure her (or any other country) from foreign menace or domination; but now, though one who called himself the pupil of that great man held the office which he had then so gloriously filled, those times had passed; and Wellington was only expressing the feeling of all whose attention was not wholly absorbed by the Reform Bill, when he declared that he felt his cheeks tingle with shame when he read the speech of the French King, boasting that the Portuguese fleet was in his possession, and that the tri-coloured flag was dictating the law to the Portuguese in the waters of the Tagus, and when he expressed his indignation that our Government had taken no steps to avert such a calamity. He admitted that some comparatively unimportant injuries had been inflicted upon a couple of French subjects in Portugal, but denied that they had been such as to form any justification of such violently aggressive measures as those of the French admiral; and he pronounced that it was exactly a case for our mediation, in which we might have remonstrated both with France and Portugal; showing to the one power that the injuries of which it had a right to complain were not such as to warrant it in extorting redress for them by means "fraught with danger to good order and to the social "repose of Europe;" and urging the other voluntarily to redress the wrongs which it could not deny. As it was, Portugal, like Holland, had been injured by her confidence in the support to be derived from her alliance with us; and France was obtaining commercial advan-

tages from her at our expense, while our ministers, not satisfied with injuring our own interests in Portugal by the indifference which they displayed to the welfare and honour of that country, were still further weakening our influence there by favouring the French trade with us at her expense.

Meantime the question of the succession to the Portuguese throne remained in as disturbed a condition as ever; and there seemed to be no slight danger that it might lead to a land invasion of Portugal by France, which would at once rekindle the flames of war throughout the whole of the Peninsula, and ultimately, in all probability, throughout Europe. During his own administration Wellington had been prevented from recognizing Don Miguel as King of Portugal by Canning's engagements with Donna Maria; but now, when all probability of an amicable arrangement between that princess and her uncle was clearly at an end, and when the vacillating conduct of her father, Don Pedro, which had already lost him the empire of Brazil, had tended to defeat rather than to further his projects of assisting her, it was clearly necessary for us to acknowledge Don Miguel, in order to avert a civil war in Portugal. It was fit indeed that, as a condition of such acknowledgment by us, we should require him to carry out the amnesty which Wellington himself had formerly insisted upon his granting; but, when that was secured, the only means at once to restore internal peace to that country, and to prevent the French from succeeding in their designs upon it, lay in our recognition of him as King, and in our inducing other nations to follow our example.

Lord Grey winced under the first reproof, and sought an escape from it in a denial of some of the Duke's

statements; but at a later day Lord Aberdeen proved the accuracy of the account which Wellington had given of these transactions by the admissions of the French Government itself. And the correctness of the view which he took of the whole question of the Portuguese succession, and of our duty in reference to it, is not affected by the unexpected turn which affairs subsequently took, when British and French officers, whom the aggressive spirit of the French Government and the culpable connivance of our own encouraged to engage in an unauthorized war, finally expelled Don Miguel, and fixed the Queen on the throne from which, when he spoke, the consent of the whole nation, as well as the superior power of her enemies, seemed alike to have permanently excluded her.

At last the Reform Bill arrived in the House of Lords, and on the 3rd of October Lord Grey moved its second reading in a speech of great eloquence, of sound argument, and, except in one or two passages, of great temper and moderation. He could not, however, forbear attacking the Duke, first of all for advising the King to postpone his visit to the City from apprehensions of danger, which he pronounced to have been groundless and unreal (though to any one else such a trifle might have appeared to have lost its interest); and secondly, for his declaration against reform, which he again asserted was regretted even by his own followers, and which, in the language of one of them, "had "shown great ignorance of public feeling, and had "driven the people to despair;" and he declared that, "except the Duke, there was scarcely a single individual "to be found who was not willing to admit that some "adjustment of the question was absolutely necessary; "nine-tenths of the people," he asserted, "had expressed

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"such a sentiment and such a desire, in a tone respect-
"ful indeed, but too loud not to be heard, too decisive
"to be misunderstood;" and though he would never recommend submission to popular clamour or popular violence, he "could not forbear to urge his hearers to "listen to the fair, reasonable, and universal wishes of "the people." With respect to the measure itself which he was advocating, he described the principle which had actuated him and his colleagues in framing it to be, "by doing all that could justly be required, to "give to the nation contentment, and to all future "Governments the support of the respectability, the "wealth, and the intelligence of the country." Though he maintained that the disfranchisement of small boroughs needed no justification, since "the power of "returning representatives was not a property, but a "trust," he nevertheless referred to the Irish Union as justifying it by precedent, since by that measure above one hundred boroughs were disfranchised which had been previously represented in the Irish House of Commons, but which sent no members to the United Parliament. He admitted that at first he had contemplated a more limited reform than that which he was now proposing, but declared that reflection had convinced him that a bold and extensive measure was not only now most prudent and most safe, but also that which afforded the best prospect of future durability. And he pressed the Peers not to reject the Bill from any belief that, as the Duke had said, the people would acquiesce in its rejection, or be led by it to grow cool in their desire for reform; on the contrary, he avowed his own conviction to be that such a step would only make a desire for a far stronger measure more irresistible.

The most objectionable part of his speech was that in

which he addressed the bishops, as if they had less right to form an independent opinion of the measure than the lay Peers. It might have been plausibly argued that their opinion was more valuable than that of any others of their order, since not one of them could have any property or influence of the kind affected by the Bill; but Lord Grey thought it becoming to address to them words of menace which he had studiously disavowed towards the laity, and, while he admitted that "by their "measures of ecclesiastical reform they had shown "themselves not indifferent to the signs of the times, "to warn them to set their houses in order to meet the "coming storm, since there were many questions likely "to arise which might take a fatal direction, if they who "ought to be the ministers of peace should set them-"selves in opposition to the feelings and wishes of the "nation." A menace so unprovoked, one may almost say so unmanly when addressed to such a body as the prelates of the Church, excited very general indignation, and it must have afterwards caused repentance and shame to the speaker himself, when, the Bill having been rejected by forty-one votes, of which twenty-one were given by bishops (for the right reverend bench was almost unanimous on the subject), some of the most malignant of the reformers made the discovery that, had they all voted differently, the Bill would have had a majority of one vote in its favour; and therefore proclaimed, with a curious kind of logic, that the bishops had caused its rejection, as if their twenty-one votes had weighed more than an equal number given by as many earls or lay barons. The consequence was that the lowest of the demagogues, to whom the Church was at all times an especial object of dislike, during the ensuing winter dwelt with such unction on no topic as on what they

called the hostility of the bishops to the interests and wishes of the people, and inflamed the mob against them till they became the object of continued insult and outrage even in the public streets; while clamorous resolutions were passed at some public meetings for their expulsion from Parliament, and at others, where the speakers argued from their unpopularity to the unworthiness of the body which they represented, insisting upon the immediate abolition of the whole Church Establishment.

The debate was long, and conducted on both sides with the ability, though not always with the calmness, which so momentous a question demanded. The most violent of the speakers, however, said but lil e that was worth notice; but Lord Melbourne, whose subsequent position as Chief of the Administration gives an importance to his words which they would not otherwise have deserved, also referred especially to the Duke's conduct, blaming particularly the course which he took upon the East Retford question, and declaring that the unfairness with which, in his opinion, he had then treated Huskisson, had been the event which had first shaken his own confidence in him.

Wellington, who delivered his sentiments at very great length on this occasion, did not condescend to take any notice of the imputation of unfairness, but again replied with great energy to Lord Grey's attack upon his declaration of hostility to reform, and also upon his advice to the King to postpone his visit to the City. In his first argument he now took what may be called a somewhat military view of the question. Lord Grey, he said, seemed to prefer attacking him to explaining or defending his own measure; but when he spoke, as he did speak in November last, he spoke "as the King's

"minister, whose duty it was as such to support the "institutions of the country: it had never been the "practice of the King's minister to give up the insti- "tutions of the country and abandon them the moment "they were attacked." He then proceeded to address himself to the provisions and principles of the Bill before him; and if some of his arguments were not themselves founded on wholly sound principles, and some were not quite consistent with each other, it is not to be denied that others of them were so solid as to render even the ablest advocates of the measure distrustful and uneasy with respect to the consequences of their measure: and that some have been remarkably verified by the event. Confining himself almost wholly to the practical view of the subject, he again pronounced a high panegyric on the House of Commons as then constituted, and proved by a reference to Lord Grey's own speeches that he was not solitary in such an estimate of its merits. Nay, he inferred that the country at large shared in it, since though the original idea of Parliamentary Reform was as old as the American war, the manifestations of any desire for such a measure had year by year become less frequent, till it was rekindled by the breaking out of the last French revolution, which unfortunately took place just before the general election in this country.

He referred with great emphasis to Lord Grey's description of the general principles which ought to regulate a reform of the representation, contending not only that the measure now brought forward was far from corresponding to that description, but that one of the Noble Earl's principal colleagues had avowed that even this measure could only be looked on as a stepping-stone to further changes. In fact, however, this Bill was of a

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most sweeping character. "It altered everything; it "changed or destroyed every interest in the country; "and even altered the relative numbers of the represen- "tatives in Parliament from the different kingdoms of "the United Empire."

But most especially he blamed the late dissolution of Parliament when adopted avowedly as an appeal to the people on this subject. He declared, and certainly in accordance both with precedent and reason, that after the Commons had agreed to the principle of the Bill (small as the majority in its favour had been), the success of General Gascoigne's amendment, touching only a single detail, ought not to have been made a pretext for abandoning it. Ministers ought rather to have carried it into committee, and there to have made such alterations in it as would have rendered it acceptable to the House of Commons. But to the dissolution "he "attributed all our misfortunes." He referred to the dissolutions in 1784 and in 1807, and showed that on neither occasion was the people called upon to deliberate on any particular measure, but was only appealed to to decide generally whether it would express its confidence in the ministers whom the Sovereign approved. But in the present instance the Administration had referred to the people, not even the general principle of Reform, for that had been affirmed by the existing House of Commons, but their own particular plan of reform; and "on the ground of the dissolution, and of the speech "from the throne announcing that dissolution, and the "reasons of it, he charged the ministers with having "deliberately excited the violent spirit which had "existed in the country at the period of the last "election; and with having been the cause of the un- "constitutional practice, hitherto unknown, of electing

"delegates for a particular purpose to Parliament:* "delegates to obey the particular instructions of their "constituents, instead of being independent members of "Parliament." He declared, truly, that this was "an "evil of which the country would long feel the conse- "quences, whatever might be the result of the present "discussions."

He did not on this occasion allude to the disfranchisement of boroughs against which no corruption had been proved, though he had not altered his opinion that such a measure was an act of positive injustice; a doctrine which is now completely exploded, and which certainly cannot be defended on any sound constitutional view of the proper principle of representative Government. The details on which he now chiefly dwelt as objectionable referred rather to the composition of the constituencies. He affirmed that the clause which gave votes for boroughs to all the householders who paid a rent of ten pounds or upwards would place the representation of those places almost wholly in the hands of "the shop- "keepers, a class of persons of all others the most likely "to combine in political views, and to be acted upon by "political clubs," of which some very unconstitutional specimens had already been seen. Nor did he think that their influence would be adequately counterbalanced by the clauses which gave votes to ten-pound copyholders, or to fifty-pound leaseholders.† The consequences, as he apprehended, would be that the relative influence of the landed interest, and of the commercial

* The truth of this charge is in a great degree admitted by Roebuck, ii. 238, who, though he asserts that the ministers "found the people excited," admits that "they, by their language and conduct, not only kept that excitement "alive, but fearfully increased it."

† The Duke here appears to have overlooked the fact that Lord Chandos's amendment required no lease.

and manufacturing interests, would be wholly changed. For in his view the close boroughs were the true protectors of the landed interest, and these were now to be disfranchised, while many towns identified with the commercial and manufacturing interests were not only to return members themselves, but, by the new franchises about to be established, would also obtain a power of greatly influencing the county elections. In Scotland, he argued that the projected reform would produce even greater alterations, while there was even less necessity for any; for he believed that it was already "one of the best governed countries in the "world; and he was sure that for the last sixty or "seventy years it had been the most prosperous." To the Irish Bill he had still greater objections, since it completely altered the arrangements made by the Acts of 1829, and had an inevitable tendency to establish a "predominant Roman Catholic influence in every county "and town in Ireland."

But what he most insisted upon was this: that above all other considerations it was the duty of Parliament to take care that after all the changes about to be made, there should "still be a Government in the country;" and that therefore the most important question was, "what would be the sort of House of Commons which a "constituency formed under the present Bill would be "likely to elect." In some places, he said, the lower classes already preponderated as electors; people subject to the most pernicious influences, and necessarily destitute of that amount of education and intelligence which could qualify them for the exercise of political power; and the representatives whom those places returned were not the most respectable or useful members of the Lower House. "What then was the kingdom to expect when

"these lower classes preponderated everywhere," as he maintained that they would do if the present Bill should pass into a law? He had heard the term Radical Reform applied to "universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual "parliaments, and their consequences;" but looking at the universal changes introduced by the present Bill, he considered this a Radical Reform; and one too not carried out on any consistent principle, but stretched or contracted in its application to the different towns to be enfranchised or disfranchised, not so much from any regard to their population or wealth, as to the political views by which they would be likely to be swayed.* The House of Commons to be returned under the new system he expected would prove "a democratical assembly of "the worst description." And he dreaded the operation of an assembly of such a character on the Government of the kingdom. He reminded his hearers that the business of the Parliament was "to assist the King with "its counsels on the arduous affairs of the kingdom;" that the King's ministers were responsible to Parliament; and especially to the House of Commons "on "account of the greater activity of its inquisitorial "power, and of its possessing exclusively the power of "the purse." That not only "every act of the Govern-"ment, or of the King, but also questions affecting the "honour, the interests, the rights, and the property of "every individual in the country were every week and "every day brought under the discussion of the House "of Commons; questions regarding the proceedings of "the Courts of Justice, regarding the use of the public "force, and hundreds of others which occur daily, in "which every individual is interested." And he argued

* That this charge was true is admitted by several warm advocates of the Reform Bill as a whole. See Roebuck, ii., 242.

that it was "only by the influence of property over the "elections of members of the House of Commons, and "by the influence of the Crown and House of Peers, "and of the property of the country upon its proceed-"ings, that the great powers of such a body as the "House of Commons could be exercised with discretion "and safety; but that the King would neither be able "to perform the duties of his high station, nor would "the House of Peers be able to perform theirs, if the "House of Commons should be formed on the principle "and plan proposed by the Bill."

He referred briefly, but forcibly, to the unparalleled "happiness, comfort, and prosperity" which the nation had so long enjoyed under the existing system, and asked, if a democratic legislative assembly should once be established among us, "how long we should continue "to enjoy those advantages." He declared that "a "democracy had never been established in any part of "the world that it had not immediately declared war "against property, against the payment of the public "debt, and against all the principles of conservation "which were secured by, and were in fact the principal "objects of the existing British Constitution. Property "and its possessors would become the common enemy." And the first and most especial object of attack would be the Established Church in Ireland, to which many of the Irish members already showed the greatest hostility, and which, "though the object of a fundamental article "in the treaty of Union between the two countries, it "was impossible to expect to be maintained when the "representatives for Ireland should come to be elected in "the manner now proposed." He even doubted whether the proposed changes would not ultimately deprive us of "our colonies and foreign possessions, and with them of

"our authority and influence abroad," by destroying "the harmony between the King's Government and the "House of Commons, so necessary to insure general "respect to both, and to preserve to the Government "the strength which is necessary to enable his Majesty "to protect and keep in order his foreign dominions, "and to insure the obedience of their inhabitants." He pronounced that "there was no instance of any "country having maintained its strength or its influ- "ence in its foreign possessions, or the respect of foreign "nations, during the existence of internal troubles and "disturbance; neither was there any instance of the "existence without such troubles of a Government con- "sisting of King, Lords, and Commons, independent of "each other, with the members of the last-named body "depending solely upon the popular choice, and being "delegates of the people;" and he referred to the example afforded by the era of the Great Rebellion, and to Oliver Cromwell's description of the House of Commons of that time, which in his words, "after having vigo- "rously withstood the encroachments of the royal power, "became itself too desirous of absolute authority, and "not only engrossed the legislative, but usurped the "executive power."

But while on these grounds he entreated the Peers to reject the measure then before them, he did not now repeat his declaration of opposition to all reform, or advise them to pledge themselves against every measure brought forward with such an object. He rather recommended them "to keep themselves free to adopt any "measure upon the subject which should secure to this "country the blessings of a Government." And to encourage them to take his advice, the next day, before the close of the debate, he took occasion to express his

unbounded contempt for the attempts made in public meetings at Birmingham and elsewhere to intimidate the Peers; to avow his conviction that the House was superior to all such intimidation; that the law was too strong to be overborne by such proceedings, and that it was supported by the universal attachment of the people; and he expressed his own trust, which he entreated his hearers to share, "in the good sense of the "country to submit to the legal and just decision to "which their lordships should come."

There can be no doubt that some of the arguments on which he thus dwelt were founded on historical experience, and on sound political reasoning; and that some of the anticipations which he thus expressed have been but too exactly verified. It must also be confessed that others of his forebodings have not been borne out by the event, and that in some instances his arguments were not based on any accurate view of the Constitution, or of the proper principles of a representative government. When he argued that a thoroughly democratic assembly would soon overturn everything, he had clearly reason on his side; but when he alleged as the infallible tokens of such an assembly that it would at once declare war upon property and its possessors, the fact of the House of Commons, as it has existed since the Reform Bill, not having done so, seems to warrant the inference that it is not the democratic assembly which he apprehended that it would prove. His prediction that the object of the first and most virulent attacks of a House of Commons reformed on the principle of the ministerial Bill would be the Established Church in Ireland was instantly verified; but that other prophecy on which he ventured, that by impairing the harmony between the Government and Parliament, it would cause the loss of our colonial

possessions, and of our influence with foreign countries, has been in no respect fulfilled.

The argument, however, which probably had in reality the greatest weight in his practical mind, was that we had prospered so greatly under the old system that it was well to be content with one which had produced such enviable fruit. Comparing in his own mind the ministerial measure with the Spanish Constitution of 1812, his confidence in his own predictions concerning the present Bill was in all likelihood strengthened by the total failure of that preposterous piece of legislation; and his general apprehension of the difficulties which this Bill would interpose in the way of carrying on the King's Government efficiently, has, even by the admission of many of its supporters, received a fulfilment which is constantly becoming more and more complete. The quarter of a century which has elapsed since the enactment of the Reform Bill has seen no less than eleven different Administrations; six of which have been in office within the last seven years; and none of which, excepting the Cabinet formed in 1841 by Sir Robert Peel, has had sufficient strength either to carry its own measures as it desired, or to resist others of which it disapproved. And this unspeakable evil is clearly an immediate result of the Reform Bill, being traceable partly to the variety of sections into which the two principal parties have gradually divided themselves—though in this way the Liberals have blundered far more than the Conservatives—and partly to the inability of the Government to withstand the constant and heavy pressure from without which this anomalous state of parties within the walls of Parliament has encouraged.

CHAPTER XLIX.

Defeat of the Reform Bill—Great Riots in consequence—The third Reform Bill—The Duke opposes it—Lord Lyndhurst defeats the Ministers—They resign—The Duke tries to form a Government, but fails—The Bill passes—His apprehensions of its evil results.

ON the 8th of October the second Reform Bill was defeated in the House of Lords by a considerable majority; and the people, who had by this time been worked up to a state of great excitement on the subject, disgraced themselves in many parts of the kingdom by outrages upon the persons and property of those who had opposed the Bill, such as have no parallel in our history; for the riots of 1780 were confined to the metropolis, but the present disturbances spread over every part of the kingdom. The general violence of the popular feeling was known; but lest it should not prove sufficiently formidable, Lord John Russell took the opportunity to write to the Chairman of the Birmingham Political Union, in acknowledgment of a vote of thanks from that body, a most inflammatory letter, assuring those who thus expressed their sense of his services "that it was impossible that the whisper of a "faction should prevail against the voice of a nation."

He subsequently added to the discredit of writing such a letter by a denial that by "the whisper of a faction" he had meant the majority of the House of Lords; though he was told to his face in Parliament that no one could believe his denial, since his words could bear no other conceivable meaning; and a month had scarcely elapsed before his colleagues, alarmed at the storm which they had raised, advised the King to issue a proclamation declaring the Association, of whose thanks he was so proud, an illegal and unconstitutional body: but for the moment his letter produced a considerable effect in making the easily-deluded multitude believe that the excesses to which they were hurrying would not be unacceptable to their rulers. In London, after committing very great devastation in many quarters, the mob a second time attacked the Duke's house at the end of Piccadilly; broke the windows, pelted the servants with large stones, and drove even the police who had assembled for its protection to take refuge within the mansion. The Duke took steps to prevent any similar outrages from doing a like injury by having iron shutters made for his windows, which are still to be seen, bearing an undying testimony to the frenzy of the time, and to the deep culpability of the ministers who had encouraged the excitement of the populace to such a degree that neither now nor, as we shall hereafter see, after the passing of the Reform Bill, could the recollection of Wellington's unequalled services obtain for him pardon from the mob for the crime of daring to entertain and adhere to his own opinions on state affairs of the most difficult and momentous nature.

But if the outrages now committed were disgraceful in London, they were infinitely more shameful and more calamitous in the provinces. At Derby, the mob, after

parading the town and doing infinite mischief, forced open one of the gaols, setting the prisoners at liberty; nor could peace be restored till many lives had been lost. At Nottingham the populace burnt the ancient castle, because it belonged to the Duke of Newcastle, who had been one of the most uncompromising opponents of the Bill; set fire to the houses of private gentlemen of the same politics; and murdered some of the inhabitants, not sparing even ladies whose husbands were obnoxious to them. But the greatest excesses of all were committed in Bristol, where, on the occasion of Sir Charles Wetherell going thither in his capacity of Recorder of the city to preside at the sessions, the mob first of all attacked him, compelling him to flee for his life, and then, encouraged by their triumph over one unarmed old man, traversed the city, plundering and destroying; set fire to it in many places, sacked the Town Hall, burnt the Custom House, the Excise Office, the gaols, the Bishop's palace, and numbers of private buildings, while the civil magistrates were terrified into inaction, and even the military authorities stood for a while irresolute and temporizing. About one hundred lives were lost; property, public and private, was destroyed to an enormous amount before tranquillity was restored; and the event, and indeed the history of the entire month over the whole kingdom, affords a lamentable proof that the people of this country are as easily worked up by political frenzy to criminal atrocities as their continental neighbours; an irresistible evidence of the rashness and wickedness of any demagogues, whether in or out of office, who, even to carry what they honestly believe to be the most desirable or necessary measures, presume to evoke a spirit which no man can pronounce when or at what cost he will be able to lay.

The parliamentary recess was very short, barely sufficient to give the members a little necessary rest, and to allow the ministers time to remodel their Bill. On the 20th of October the King prorogued the Parliament in a speech which announced the intention of the ministers again to introduce a measure of reform at the earliest opportunity; and on the 6th of December it was again assembled, and a similar announcement was made in the same manner, with the additional statement that "a "speedy and satisfactory settlement of the question was "becoming daily of more pressing importance to the "security of the State and to the contentment and welfare "of the people." And such language now only expressed the universal feeling. All parties, including the King and the ministers, were greatly alarmed at the lawless scenes that had so lately been witnessed. The power exercised by the political unions was clearly one main source of the mischief; and so strongly did the Duke of Wellington feel on the subject that, though not holding any office, he addressed a letter to the King, pointing out the evil which they had already caused, and the further dangers to be apprehended from them. His arguments produced such an effect on the King's mind that he in his turn made a strong representation to his ministers, insisting on the suppression of these unions; and on the 22nd of November a proclamation was issued denouncing all such associations as unconstitutional and illegal. To such a pitch of audacity and insolence, however, had the unions by this time proceeded, that they avowed in the most open manner their intention to pay no regard to the proclamation, some of them even displaying such ostentatious contempt for it as to paste up copies of it at their doors along with notices of their future meetings; while in the excited state of

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public feeling, the Government, perhaps prudently, feared to take any stronger measures for their suppression.

Parliament had not been reassembled a week when the third Reform Bill was introduced by Lord John Russell: its provisions differed in many important particulars from those contained in its predecessors, especially in the principle of deciding what boroughs should be allowed to retain or to receive the franchise, not by a reference solely to the population, but by taking also into consideration their wealth and importance as testified by the amount of taxes paid by their inhabitants, and by the number of rateable houses contained in their limits. The schedules were in consequence greatly altered, though not even now with perfect impartiality; the relative proportions of members to be returned by each of the three united kingdoms were less changed than before; the rights of the freemen were to be preserved; and other smaller alterations were made, principally based upon amendments which in the previous Parliament had been proposed in vain by the Opposition, who now reasonably looked upon their introduction as an important triumph, and as a full justification of the vigorous resistance which the former Bill had received in the Lower, and of the defeat which it had sustained in the Upper House. So greatly, indeed, were many of the most earnest opponents of the Bill conciliated (though their objections to the measure as a whole were far from being removed, and though the Opposition to it in the Commons was still decided and uncompromising, though ineffectual), that, when it had been passed in that House, and when on the 26th March it first came before the Peers, several of those who had hitherto been its firmest opponents, now, headed by Lord Harrowby, avowed their intention of supporting the second reading,

in order to make further improvements on it in committee.

Not that this concession on their part was caused solely or even mainly by their sense of the improvements which had been made in the Bill; it was in all probability rather prompted by their knowledge that the ministers had been pressing the King to allow them to create a number of Peers, for the purpose of securing a majority in the Upper House if the success of the Reform Bill could be secured by no other means; and that the King, though at first expressing the greatest alarm at such a proposal, which he rightly denounced as entirely subversive of the Constitution, had subsequently showed a disposition to yield his opinion to the pressing difficulties of the case. In fact, William IV. had sanctioned his private secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, in communicating to the leaders of the Opposition in the House of Lords his sense of the dilemma in which he felt himself to be placed, and his fear that he should be compelled to consent to the creation of Peers unless they should in some degree modify their resistance to the Bill, which it was now clear to most people could not with safety be wholly rejected. Lord Harrowby, therefore, with Lord Wharncliffe, who excused himself for differing with the Duke on this point on the ground that Wellington, from the number of years that he had passed abroad in the service of his country, had not had the same opportunities with himself of learning the progress of political feeling in this country, and the eagerness of the people in general for reform, promised to consent to the second reading of the Bill; but the Duke's objections to it were scarcely lessened in any respect by the alterations which had been made in it since its rejection in the

preceding year; he affirmed that they were very unimportant, that the Bill, even by Lord Grey's own admission, was still "really and truly and in principle exactly the same measure" as that which he had opposed in the last session; that it was still "incom-" patible with the existence of a practicable scheme of "government for this or any other country," and in short that it would produce "a complete revolution" in the three kingdoms; and he still believed that it might be defeated by the maintenance of an attitude of resolute firmness towards both the Sovereign and the clamourers for the Bill among the people. He therefore refused in the least to relax in his personal opposition to it; but, avowing plainly that though "he was actuated by no party motives, and had no "party purposes to serve, he saw no hope at all "that the present Bill could be made such a measure "that it could be for any good purpose adopted," proclaimed his intention to oppose it at every stage; and when, on the 10th of April, Lord Grey moved its second reading, he again delivered an elaborate speech against it.

In one and that an important respect, his language now differed from that which he had formerly held on the subject, in that he admitted it to be "the duty "of Parliament to proceed gradually in making amend-" ments in the representation;" but he urged likewise that such amendment to be safe must be very gradual and slow. And he not only denied this to be the character of the present Bill, which he still maintained to be so "full of gross errors, of the most intolerable "partiality and arbitrary distinctions in its details," that to amend it to any good purpose must be wholly impossible; (while Lord Grey, as he reminded the House,

had given them no reason to expect that the Cabinet would accept any substantial amendment;) but he also affirmed, declaring that he spoke "from personal know-
"ledge with respect to the southern counties of the
"kingdom, and from sure report as to the other coun-
"ties generally, that the Bill was not popular, that
"the best part of the public were not desirous of it;
"that it was opposed to the sentiments of all the gen-
"tlemen, of the yeomanry, and of the middle classes
"generally, though they could not always express their
"sentiments in public for fear of the mob." Such an excitement as did exist in its favour he believed to proceed for the most part from a belief that the King was desirous of its success; a belief which, in his opinion, was completely erroneous, since the King was only following the advice of his ministers. And he further asserted that even of those who were the warmest advocates of the Bill, many supported it not for its own sake, but for the sake of the ulterior measures which they foresaw would follow in its train.

That there was distress in the country he fully admitted; but he contended in the first place that that distress proceeded as much from fear of the success of the Bill as of any danger to the public peace which might be anticipated from its defeat; while, from whatever cause it proceeded, the ministers themselves admitted that it could not be in any degree relieved by the enactment of the Bill. He himself maintained that the passing of the Bill, far from relieving, would even aggravate the existing distress by increasing the expenses of the Government; and he supported his argument by a reference to France, where the establishment of a more democratic Constitution had led to a most amazing augmentation of the expenditure in every branch of the

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Government. No one will deny that his forebodings on this head have been amply verified by the history of the period which has elapsed since he spoke, as they have also been in respect of the danger on which he again dwelt with renewed earnestness, lest the future members of the House of Commons would in very many instances become rather delegates of their particular constituencies than representatives of the country at large; a condition to which the great Burke had indignantly refused to be reduced when the burgesses of Bristol required his submission to it, and disgraced themselves for ever by rejecting his services as a punishment for his refusal; one of which Wellington now closely pointed out both the unconstitutional character and the danger, but one in which many members now less far-sighted and less upright willingly acquiesce, and of which some are even so lost to all proper sense of their independence as to boast, and which they in vain pretend to justify.

He pointed out with great force that the measure before the House would greatly affect the measures of 1828 and 1829 for the relief of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Dissenters, before Parliament had had time to see the proper working of those important enactments, and again urged on his hearers that the only safe course for them and for the country was to refuse the present Bill a second reading.

The arguments however of Lord Harrowby and Lord Wharncliffe, or rather the apprehensions of an immediate creation of Peers if the Bill should thus be rejected, deprived his advice of its usual weight, and the Lords, by a majority of nine in a House of above three hundred and sixty members, agreed to the second reading. Wellington recorded a long and elaborate protest against the Bill, in which he recapitulated many of the

arguments which had formed the staple of his speech, and which was accepted as their political creed, and signed by no fewer than seventy-three of his followers.

The carrying however of the second reading did not secure the success of the Bill. On the contrary, many of those who concurred in that step had at the same time proclaimed their intention of greatly altering the Bill in committee, and the first division on the details of the Bill showed that the opponents of the Bill still formed a majority of the Upper House whenever they were united in their views. On going into committee on the Bill, Lord Grey proposed to follow the course which had been adopted by the House of Commons, of disfranchising the boroughs named in the first two schedules before proceeding to allot representatives to the places intended to be enfranchised. But Lord Lyndhurst desired first to decide what places should be selected to send new or additional members, on the ground that their enfranchisement would afford the best ground for the disfranchisement of those places which it was intended to deprive of their rights; and he proposed an amendment to that effect, which he justified partly by the argument that it was "more gracious to "begin with acts of favour than of severity," and that to adopt it would be laying the best foundation for disfranchisement, from the necessity of avoiding an unmanageable increase in the numbers of the Lower House; and partly also by the precedent of former Reform Bills ever since the days of Mr. Pitt; and by the language of Lord John Russell himself, who on a previous occasion had proposed "first to agree as to "what towns should be enfranchised, that so the House "of Commons might see what extent of disfranchise-"ment would be necessary." He was supported by

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several other Tory Peers, but was opposed with great bitterness by Lord Brougham, whose objections however were based more on the designs which he chose to attribute to the advocates of the amendment, of defeating the whole Bill by a side-wind, than on the amendment itself, to the arguments in favour of which he scarcely attempted any reply.

His language called up the Duke, who defended the conduct pursued by himself and his friends with great vigour, declaring that "there never had been a measure "brought before Parliament the opponents of which "were less liable to the imputation of party motives." For himself he disclaimed all intention of defeating the Bill by his support of the amendment. He admitted that he had been "the decided enemy of the Bill, being "convinced in his conscience that it never could be "made anything but an evil to the country." But he declared that he looked upon the whole case and his own duty altered when the principles of the Bill had been so far adopted by the Peers that they consented to its second reading. "He thought that it had then "become his duty as an honest member of Parliament "to consider the Bill according to the principles, good "or bad, on which it had been brought in, and to do "what was in his power to make it as good a Bill for "the country as possible, consistently with those prin-"ciples." He declared the desire of himself and his friends to be "to proceed according to the examples set "before them by the Constitution; and that they were "actuated by no dirty view of party interest, or by any "intention to get rid of the Bill." He insisted that every intelligible principle and invariable precedent was in favour "of giving enfranchisement the precedence "whenever any alteration was to be made." He ad-

mitted that he should again oppose the principle of the whole Bill on the motion for its third reading, but declared that while in committee he would "never do "otherwise than fairly attempt to make it as little "injurious as possible, consistently with the mainte- "nance of his principles."

Lord Lyndhurst's amendment was carried by a considerable majority. And its success had an effect for which no one was prepared. Not only was the amendment of a very unimportant character, regulating merely the form of proceeding, and not in the least affecting the substance of the Bill; but when on a previous occasion it had been proposed in the House of Commons, Lord Althorp, as the organ of the Ministry, had himself pronounced it to be a matter of no importance whether they began with the enfranchising or disfranchising clauses; but had pressed the arrangement of the Government as the more convenient merely because the clauses were so printed in the Bill. Yet now Lord Grey thought fit to treat the same amendment as of vital consequence, involving the total defeat of the Bill; and the next day he went to the King to demand permission to create such a number of Peers as might enable him for the future to overbear all opposition. The King very reasonably refused his request. He had, though, as Lord Grey well knew, not without the greatest repugnance and pain, brought his mind to consent to such a measure if it should prove indispensable to carrying the Bill at all. But he could never take such a step for the sake of some paltry matter of detail, or of a single clause; much less for a mere question of form which the Ministers themselves had previously acknowledged to be unimportant. The moment that the numbers of the division on Lord Lyndhurst's amend-

ment had been announced, Lord Ellenborough, speaking on behalf of a large party of the Tory Peers, had declared that the ministers need not fear on that account for the general fate of their Bill, since the further amendments which he and his friends desired to make would not touch the principal disfranchising clauses of the Bill (in fact, that they were prepared to consent to disfranchising the whole of the boroughs in schedule A); nor, consequently, could they affect the chief of the enfranchising clauses either. And for a moment Lord Grey seemed satisfied, only remarking that this was the first time that he had heard that his opponents were willing to make such extensive concessions. But on further reflection he and his colleagues judged, and the event proved that they judged correctly, that they had his Majesty for the time in their power: they at once resigned their offices; and the King in great perplexity sent for Lord Lyndhurst, and despatched him to the Duke of Wellington to demand his advice and assistance in the emergency in which he found himself so suddenly and unexpectedly placed. It had taken the Duke and the Opposition in general as much by surprise as their Sovereign. And as none of them were in the least prepared for such an event as this precipitate abandonment of their posts by the late ministers, they were prepared with no arrangement, and a day or two were consumed in inquiries and discussions among the leaders of the Tory party.

In the mean time the violence of the supporters of the Bill was such as once more to throw the deepest discredit on themselves and their cause. In the House of Commons they passed a resolution declaratory of their unabated confidence in Lord Grey's Ministry; and that was a reasonable and proper step for them to take; but even

those who, being members of one or other House of Parliament, had this constitutional way of evincing the unchanged nature of their sentiments could not be contented with it, but proceeded to the most disloyal and seditious lengths. Many of them in their fury attributed the King's refusal to create Peers on the late occasion to the influence exerted over him by the Queen; and one member did not scruple before a public meeting to attribute it to "some women." The mob, easily excited, took these absurd and wicked insinuations and assertions for truth; and some public meetings resounded with "groans for the Queen;" at others her bust was introduced with a halter round the neck. Nor were the mob content with such vicarious insults, but when, a day or two after the resignation of the ministers, their Majesties came to London from Windsor, a dense rabble assailed the royal carriage with the most ferocious and abusive outcries, hurled missiles of various kinds at the windows, and were only prevented from making still more formidable assaults on their Sovereign by the resolute front shown to them by the military escort. One nobleman, Lord Milton, who, though not endowed with any great capacity, enjoyed considerable influence from the great wealth of his father and his own unblemished private character, disgraced himself by threatening to refuse payment of his taxes if the King did not take steps to secure the instant enactment of the Reform Bill; and his seditious example was praised and held up for imitation by worse men than himself, who invited the populace to form associations to resist payment of taxes, and to join in a run upon the Bank for gold, in the hopes of producing such distress and ruin that, even to the firmest adversaries of the Bill, its success should seem an evil inferior to those which

already pressed upon the whole country, and menaced the permanence of all its laws and institutions. But these disgraceful scenes had no effect on the firm mind of Wellington. He was himself the mark for the foulest abuse and threats of the rabble; for it was soon known that to him the perplexed and terrified King had turned for aid in his emergency. Nor is there any action of his life more characteristic of him, or more fully showing his undeviating adherence, at any cost of personal feeling, to what he conceived to be the line of his duty than his conduct on this occasion. When, on Tuesday the 8th of May, the ministers resigned their offices, the King was at Windsor; but at the end of the week he returned to town, and by his appointment the Duke immediately went to the Palace. He found his Majesty in great distress; looking upon himself as bound by a deliberate pledge* to his people to secure for them a large measure of Parliamentary Reform; but equally decided that he should be committing a great sin against the Constitution if he acceded to the request of his late ministers to overwhelm the House of Lords by a creation of new Peers, unless in a case of the strongest necessity; and likewise convinced that no such case had now arisen. His wish therefore was that Wellington should relinquish his own objections to reform, and, exerting his well-known influence over others who held the same opinions, should form for him an Administration which should carry such an effective measure of reform as would satisfy the expectations of the country; and at the same time should save him from the necessity, which of all others he most dreaded, of violating the independence of the Upper House of Parliament.

* Besides the Duke's own speeches on this affair, see those of Mr. Baring in the House of Commons, May 14, 17.

What now was the Duke to do? His judgment as to the mischief to be apprehended from any sweeping reform was in no respect altered. But in the first place he now clearly saw that some such measure was absolutely inevitable; and that a continued resistance to it on his part would lead to another evil also, still more pernicious in principle, and perhaps equally disastrous in effect. And secondly (a consideration which had perhaps as much weight with him as either of the others), he conceived that the King had been ill used by the peremptory tone which his late ministers had adopted towards him on very insufficient grounds; that if he himself did not stand by him his Majesty would be delivered back helpless into their hands, compelled to submit to all their demands, and to do their bidding in their own way; and that as a loyal subject of the Crown it was his paramount duty to endeavour to rescue him from such a fate. He had to decide between two great difficulties, between that of surrendering his own deliberate and deeply-seated judgment, and that of refusing his service to his Sovereign when called upon to afford it, and, by such refusal, contributing to the adoption of another measure which both he and that Sovereign regarded with well-founded abhorrence. If he had been guided by personal considerations, the former course he clearly saw would expose him to bitter reproaches on the score of political inconsistency, and to painful misconstruction, as if prompted by an undue ambition of office. The latter would very probably restore him his popularity with the mob, to whom he would then appear as one immediate cause of the success of the Bill, which they so greatly desired. But such were not the considerations which ever influenced his conduct. The latter course, to his view, was recommended by his duty to himself;

the former was enjoined by his duty to his royal master and to his country; and when forced to choose between the two he did not hesitate. He at once placed his services unreservedly at his Sovereign's disposal, not making any conditions for himself, but assuring him "of his "readiness to serve him in or out of office, in any way "that might best assist him in carrying on the Govern- "ment; and might enable him successfully to resist the "advice which had been given him by his late ministers."

He would probably have preferred not taking office himself, but he found that the King wished, indeed thought it indispensable, that he should be at the head of the new Administration; and he at once submitted, and laboured with great assiduity to form an efficient Government. In this task he failed. He had anticipated great, he found insurmountable difficulties. Lord Lyndhurst would probably have consented to resume the Great Seal; Mr. A. Baring, a man of eminent ability, and especially of most extensive financial knowledge, was willing to act as Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Mr. Sutton, the Speaker, agreed to become a Secretary of State; but Peel, whose aid he considered almost indispensable, unhesitatingly refused to join him; influenced partly by a regard for his own character for consistency, and partly by a feeling that as the Reform Bill was to be carried, it would be better that it should become law under the auspices of its original proposers: others also, who would gladly have co-operated in any steps calculated to avert a creation of Peers, were of opinion that the vote of confidence in Lord Grey's Ministry, which (as has been already mentioned) the House of Commons had passed on their resignation, rendered it impossible for any other Ministry to stand for a single day; and on the 15th the Duke abandoned the undertaking.

It is perhaps as well for his own fame and for the country that he did so. At a subsequent period* he declared his principle to be that the maintenance of a Government in which the Sovereign had confidence was of more consequence than any particular law whatever. But in the present instance the question scarcely arises how far a minister can be justified by any such consideration in advocating a measure which he has formerly disapproved, and indeed still looks upon as dangerous, because he was now actuated by the feeling that he had, as in 1829, to choose between two great evils, and that the one which he was choosing was the lighter evil of the two. Still it is not wholly sufficient that a statesman's motives should be pure and honourable; to render him really useful to the State, they must likewise be felt to be such by the country which he desires to serve. And in this instance it is certain that his conduct would not have been generally appreciated. Not only was he reviled in the lowest terms by demagogues at public meetings; not only did the most influential organs of the public press outrun even their violence, denouncing him as guilty of "humiliating and shameful "meanness, of a sordid and execrable lust for office," but (what is very remarkable, if their language be contrasted with that of the Tory party, whose conscientious resistance to the Bill the Duke had been labouring to terminate, but who bore their frank and cordial testimony to the unparalleled and self-sacrificing disinterestedness of his motives;) the reforming party in the House of Commons, headed by the members of the late Ministry, though his success would have insured the triumph of the measure which they professed to desire above all things, were as loud as any in their endeavours

* See his language on the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846.

to render that success impossible, by the most artful insinuations against his objects, the most bitter attacks on his conduct, and the most persevering depreciation of his talents and of his character, and of his present motives. It was plain enough that while they desired the Reform Bill for the country, they were equally desirous of the glory of carrying it for themselves. And had he, by forming an Administration, deprived them of that glory, there would have been no forgiveness for him. As it was, his failure and subsequent conduct made room for the purity of his motives to be fully seen; to be extolled without suspicion by his own followers at the time, and subsequently to be acknowledged even by his present detractors.

Lord Grey and his colleagues resumed office, and on the 17th the Duke gave a full account to the Peers of his recent conduct, and of the designs which had prompted it. The motive which he chiefly put forward was his desire to assist his Majesty in the distress in which he found him, declaring that, after the appeal which the King had made to him, "if he had been "capable of saying to his Majesty, 'I cannot assist you "'in this affair,' he should have been ashamed to show "his face in the streets." And even now, when his attempt to carry out his Sovereign's wishes had been disappointed, and when he felt that the misrepresentation and calumny to which that attempt had exposed him had been incurred in vain, he still declared that he did not regret his conduct, nor think that he had formed any misconception of the path which loyalty and duty had enjoined him to take.

This was the last speech which he made in Parliament for some little time. The circumstances under which Lord Grey returned to his post placed the King alto-

gether at his mercy, and he and the Lord Chancellor extorted from the reluctant Monarch a written permission to create such a number of Peers as should suffice to insure the passing of their Bill.* From this most shameful and fatal of all possible measures, however, the Ministry and the country were saved by the prudence of the Duke, who, adopting the same course which he would have pursued in the field of war, of withdrawing his forces from a post which had become untenable, now counselled his supporters to desist from an opposition which must not only have been fruitless, but which must also have drawn with it additional evils of the most incurable character; and accordingly he and the greater number of the Tory Peers absented themselves for a while from the House, and did not again occupy their seats there till the Bill had passed the third reading, and had become the law of the land; the King however refusing his minister's earnest request to go to Parliament to express his royal consent to it in person; which, he said, after the way in which he had been treated, "as a gentleman he could "not do."

The history of this period has been lately written by a most ardent and plain-spoken reformer, who while blaming the Duke severely for his original declaration against reform, pronounces that "he nobly redeemed his

* Some persons, and Mr. Roebuck among others, have doubted whether after all Lord Grey would have ventured actually to create the new Peers if his threat, and the knowledge of his having received authority to do so, had failed in its effect. It is certain that a great number of the Whig Peers headed by the late Duke of Somerset remonstrated with the minister against such a step, and threatened to withdraw their support from the Bill if it should be adopted; but we may probably not only agree with Lord Campbell (Lives of the Chancellors, ch. vii. 563) that Lord Grey had gone too far to recede; and also from Lord Brougham's sketch of the Duke of Wellington (Hist. Sketches, ii., 360, ed. 1856) we may infer that though he undoubtedly was most reluctant to take such a step, he would not have shrunk from it.

" error by now yielding to the popular demand."* But the mob at the time were less forgiving; nor did their triumph at all abate their animosity against the man who had so steadily opposed their inclinations on this subject. Within a fortnight of the time that the English Bill had received the royal assent, the Duke happened to go to the Mint to give Signor Pistrucci a sitting for a bust on which he was employed. It was the 18th of June, the anniversary of the day on which, within the memory of all but the youngest men, he had given the final blow to the spirit of revolution, and restored tranquillity and prosperity to Europe on the field of Waterloo. But neither the recollection of that great day, nor the sight of the well-won Waterloo medal on his breast, could mollify the fury of the excited and ungrateful rabble. A vast mob waylaid him on his departure from the Tower, at first limiting their hostility to outcries and words of insult, then rapidly proceeding to pelt him with dirt and stones, till one ruffian, more audacious than the rest, seized his horse, and endeavoured to pull him from the saddle. He himself was cool and undismayed, but it was evident that he was in imminent danger. One or two of his old soldiers, Chelsea Pensioners, who were at hand, came to his succour, and they were soon joined by a few policemen, who conducted him to Lincoln's Inn in safety, where he had some further business to transact; there he remained, the mob still yelling out their infuriated menaces around the door, till a sufficient force of police arrived from Bow Street, who, with a body of lawyers whom news of the disturbance and of his danger called from their chambers and from the adjacent Court of Chancery, escorted him in safety to his own house. The mob however followed

* Roebuck, ii., 336.

him home, still hooting and reviling him; and though now reduced to inaction, displaying such a furious spirit, that, as according to his usual custom he had a large dinner-party in the evening to celebrate the victory of Waterloo, it was necessary not only to retain the police, but also to assemble a body of regular troops in front of the house, under whose protection he and his guests who had borne their share in the glories of that day might celebrate its recollection without incurring the risk of destruction from their own countrymen.

This outrage however, disgraceful only to those who committed it, and to the demagogues whose acts had wrought them up to such wicked madness, had no effect in intimidating him whose life it had endangered. On the contrary, deeming himself still at liberty to oppose the Irish Reform Bill, he offered a vigorous resistance to some of its provisions, chiefly to those which regulated the franchise of future voters, and which he maintained were a reversal of the settlement effected by the Roman Catholic Relief Bill in 1829, and tended to invest the Roman Catholics with a dangerous amount of political power. His resistance however was unsuccessful; in August that and the Scotch Reform Bill also became the law of the land; and then, instead of showing any resentment at his defeat, though still feeling the deepest alarm for the consequences of the measures which he had thus opposed, he frankly accepted them as an irreversible law, and zealously and patriotically applied himself resolutely to the task of falsifying his own predictions by contributing to avert the evils which he believed that he foresaw.

His apprehensions however of the effects of the Reform Bill were not only sincere, but lasting. Not only did he now declare that "few people could be sanguine

" enough to imagine that we should ever again be as pros-
" perous as we had been :"* but many months afterwards he wrote to one of his friends whose judgment he most valued,† that though many were honestly and wisely making " great efforts to give the Reform Bill a fair chance " of working not injuriously to the country, he himself " agreed with those who thought that it was all in vain. " There was," in his eyes, " no authority, nor could " there now be any in this country capable of governing " it and of securing those institutions which are the " pillars of its prosperity and strength. We had made," he said, " a reform which satisfied nobody; which had " established a Constitution resembling the French Re-
" public of the year 3." And yet even this had not allayed the strife of parties, which " were as violent as " ever; the Tories, now called the Conservatives, wishing " to keep things in their present state, and the Whigs " and Radicals being desirous of still further changes." If his view of home politics was desponding, that which he took of our connection with the affairs of the Continent was more gloomy still. "We were now," he declared, "in every sense

'Britons, a race from all the world disjoined;'

" and he hoped that it might continue so. We had it " not in our power, under existing circumstances, to " do anything but mischief. He was sick at heart, and " could at times gnaw the flesh from his bones in vexa-
" tion and despair."

This was strong language, and it can hardly be maintained that such alarm as it indicated could have been justified by even a more sweeping change than that to which

* Roebuck's Diary, i., 67.

† Malcolm's Life, ii., 588.

it referred. There can be no question but that the alteration which the Bill effected was great in effect as well as in principle. The landed aristocracy which had hitherto almost monopolized the privilege of returning members to the House of Commons was now compelled to divide it with the middle class; while the manufacturing interests also obtained a share of political power from which till now it had been nearly excluded. Yet so far was the influence of the landed proprietors from being extinguished, that it can hardly be argued with any reason that it was unduly depressed, when the disfranchisement of the nomination boroughs was counterbalanced by an allotment to the counties of nearly double the number of their previous seats, and by the Chandos clause which gave votes to the tenant-farmers. Again, there was nothing calculated, if properly considered, to alarm an intelligent lover of the Constitution in the principle of the disfranchisement of places which, if the theory of representation had from the first been properly understood, never ought to have returned and never would have returned members at all; while more justifiable still was the enfranchisement of those great and wealthy towns which had indeed risen into opulence and importance at a comparatively recent period, but which were now in every respect so considerable that to leave them any longer unrepresented was an absurdity as well as a scandal. At the same time it must be added that by the admission of many eager but candid reformers, this part of the Bill, though apparently the most reasonable, is not that which has worked the best; since they confess that the small boroughs now bereft of their old privileges had exercised those privileges on the whole greatly for the benefit of the State, and had been wont "to send to Parliament members more eloquent

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"and better able to serve the State than the new "boroughs with larger constituencies which have been "substituted for them."*

The extension of the right of voting to many classes which had not hitherto enjoyed it was a much more important innovation; yet, since it seems undeniable that all who have a sufficient amount of educated intelligence, coupled with a sufficient independence in their circumstances, to enable them to form an honest judgment on political matters, are entitled to such a voice in the management of their affairs as is implied in the possession of a vote at the election of a representative, one can hardly allow that any imminent peril was incurred by allowing such a privilege in counties to the tenant-farmers, and in towns to the ten-pound householders who now received it; nor can it be contended that those classes are not at the present day as intelligent and as independent as the old freemen and forty-shilling freeholders who were still permitted to retain the franchise. In some respects the new Bill introduced improvements which no one could deny to be such. The clause that abridged the enormous time previously allowed for the duration of an election, which in former days had contributed to the ruin of many a candidate, and to the permanent embarrassment of many a powerful family, was surely an unmixed good; as was the provision made for the registration of voters, which was its indispensable accompaniment; while the defects which were with the greatest reason complained of, namely, the gross partiality too often shown in selecting the boroughs to be deprived of or to be left in possession of the franchise, and in fixing their future boundaries, affected mere

* Lord Campbell, 'Lives of the Chancellors' (Lord Cowper), iv., 287.

details with which no principle was connected, and which could have no bearing whatever on the Constitution in general.

On the other hand, as has been already mentioned, it cannot be denied that some of Wellington's forebodings have been strictly verified: that the tendency of constituencies to look upon their representatives as mere delegates, and of the representatives to acquiesce in that view of their position, has greatly increased, in spite of the unanswerable arguments with which Burke demolished it nearly fifty years before; and that the hands of the King's Government since that time have generally been deplorably and perniciously weak. And we may reasonably fear that we have not yet seen the end. The great evil of change is that even salutary reforms form a precedent for, and open the door to other alterations which are neither desirable nor safe. The great problem of legislation, since all human affairs must of necessity stand in frequent need of amendment and improvement, is so to amend and improve that the changes from time to time introduced shall stop when they cease to be amendments and improvements. But—

"A downhill reformation rolls on fast;"

and whether that problem was successfully solved by the Reform Bill yet remains to be seen. Its original authors on its first introduction proclaimed that it had been made an extensive measure in order that it might be a sufficient and a final one; and for some years they steadily adhered to the spirit of this declaration. But already the divisions of parties have tempted the leaders of each to vie with one another in the introduction of further measures of parliamentary reform, to which it is notorious that the country itself is indifferent; which

not one of the proposers except the extreme Radical party sincerely desires; and which, by the extension of the suffrage which must inevitably form a part of any measure of the kind, will increase the democratic element in the Constitution, and increase at the same time the certainty of further change in the same direction. It will also greatly increase corruption. In the judgment of the historian of the Whig Ministry, whose opinions have been more than once already referred to, the Reform Bill of 1832 augmented the corruption that then existed; and the axiom which he lays down, that in* small constituencies it is in vain to look for purity of election, will be found still more applicable to constituencies composed chiefly of a very poor class of voters. In spite of the spread of education among the lower orders, which is an undeniable as well as a most gratifying fact, and one for which the country is very mainly indebted to the chief man in Lord Grey's Ministry, it will still be out of all reason to expect that a labouring man, whose utmost toil can but procure for himself and his family a scanty and oftentimes a precarious subsistence, should have a sufficiently deep conviction of the advantage to be expected by the country from one line of politics rather than from another, to withstand the temptation of bartering his vote to spare his sinews or lessen his difficulties.

Not that even under a more democratic Constitution we should share the Duke's despair of the future of England. Though our rulers have undoubtedly committed one or two great errors, it cannot be said that on the whole we have been worse governed since the passing of the Reform Bill than before. Nor is it probable that we shall be. The schoolmaster who is abroad has

* Roebuck, vol. ii., p. 414.

taught almost as much to the higher classes as to the lower. He has diffused among them a candid appreciation of the soundest rules of political economy in all its branches, a general apprehension of the legitimate principles and objects of government, and has enforced even upon the coldest and the proudest a respect for the independence of their poorer neighbours. During the same period the prosperity and wealth of the kingdom have likewise been greatly increased, and though it is probable that this may have been partly caused by the vast influx of the precious metals which the recent discoveries in California and Australia have poured into our lap, it is owing no doubt far more to the inherent energy of our people at home, engendered and fostered by that British liberty, the only blessing of which they have kept the monopoly. No king, no law will attempt to check that freedom of speech and freedom of thought which are reciprocally both the parent and the offspring of the British spirit; and while that survives unimpaired, we may believe as well as hope that the nation which preserves it will, as far as its material happiness and honour are concerned, bid as successful a defiance to dangers which approach it from the side of democracy, as it has in bygone times made a triumphant resistance to the assaults of ambitious despotism.

CHAPTER L.

Errors of the Ministers in their foreign policy—Disturbed state of Ireland—Abolition of Slavery—State of the Irish Church—Wellington opposes the admission of the Jews to Parliament—His bust is placed in the Bodleian—He is made Chancellor of Oxord.

DURING the remainder of the session of 1832, Wellington directed his principal attention to foreign affairs; respecting which he disapproved of the ministerial measures almost as decidedly as he had objected to their domestic policy. In fact, he could hardly do otherwise, since their main object, in his opinion, was to mark their difference from his own Government "by taking "on every point precisely the contrary line,"* and to stir up a war in some quarter or other, provided it should not be one of "such magnitude as to oblige them to go "to Parliament for supplies." Nor could the ministers justly complain of his mistrust, even though it may have arisen from some misconstruction of their real purpose; for the fact appears to have been that the chief members of the Cabinet were so absorbed at this time with the Reform Bill that they allowed their Foreign Secretary to conduct the affairs of his department almost without the slightest interference or control; that minister was

* See his conversation with Raikes, July 24.—Raikes's Diary, i., 66.

under the continual influence of a spirit the worst fault of which was not so much its constant restlessness, though that (as was remarked by Sir R. Peel in the very last speech he ever delivered in Parliament)* was apt to fester every wound, and to provoke resentments which a wiser policy might have soothed, as a proneness to employ toward the weak a language which he forbore to address to the strong and powerful. And though he was as yet only in what may be called the infancy of his power, he was already beginning to give a practical illustration of Talleyrand's definition of "non-intervention." "Non-intervention," said the aged statesman, whose experience of Governments of all kinds and of all countries no doubt helped to suggest the interpretation, "is "a metaphysical and political term, meaning much the "same as intervention."† But a line of policy which should justify such a comment was as completely at variance with Wellington's theory as with his practice; and throughout this summer and autumn our conduct with respect to Belgium and Holland incurred his severest reprehension. In Parliament he loudly objected to the manner in which our existing Government had combined our course of action with France, and "had abandoned the cause of the King of Holland." He proved irrefutably that the King of Holland had done all that became him to secure peace; that we had no possible cause of complaint against him; but that our Government had turned against him for no other reason than because Prince Leopold had been elected Sovereign of Belgium. He showed that the treaty

* Peel's speech on Mr. Roebuck's motion in 1850, vol. iv. of his collected speeches,

† "C'est un mot métaphysique et politique, qui signifie à peu près la même chose qu'intervention."

which originally we had had no small share in proposing, and to which the King of Holland had frankly intimated his consent, though we had declared it to be "unalterable "and irrevocable," was nevertheless soon discarded by us in favour of some new provisions proposed by the Belgian Commissioners; and that it was as a punishment to the King of Holland for not discarding a treaty on his acceptance of which we ourselves had insisted, that we had allowed our fleets to combine with the French in the blockade of the Scheldt, and the reduction of Antwerp.

To his private friends he stated his objections to the system pursued by the Cabinet somewhat differently, though not less forcibly. He did not apprehend war as likely to be the result, because he looked upon it as clear that "France and England united were too "strong for the rest of the world;"* but while he admitted that so far this union between the two countries was calculated to preserve peace for the moment, he contended that our rulers had been cajoled into it by the French King; "that its objects were exclusively "French; that it tended to the establishment not merely "of French influence, but of French rule and supre-"macy; and that we could not dissolve it but at the "risk of war, and that too a war as costly as the last "without its chances of ultimate success. The object of "France was dominion, to be acquired by any means, "but especially by fomenting intestine disturbances in "other nations; ours ought to be to keep all other "countries independent of France." And since this was the case, "and since every measure which was "adopted in consequence of our alliance with France "must be inconsistent with our interests, the peace "which that alliance gave us was hollow; and if ter-

* Letter to Raikes, Nov. 14, 1832.—Raikes's Diary, i., 102.

" minated suddenly, as it probably might be, the more " unexpectedly that event should occur the more disas- " trous must the war be which would ensue upon its " rupture."

We have seen before, that, in a time of his greatest difficulty in the Peninsula, he had expressed his sense of his own inability with his existing means to avert the perils with which he was surrounded, by saying that " we could only hope that all that might happen would " not happen." And so, in this instance, the evil of sudden and disastrous war which he anticipated did not take place; yet it cannot be said that his apprehensions were unfounded by any one who remembers how often the selfish intrigues of Louis Philippe, not only in Europe, but Asia, brought the two nations to the very verge of hostilities. It may be added, that his views on this subject were shared by his old acquaintance Pozzo di Borgo, one of the most experienced and sagacious statesmen in Europe, though in his character of Russian ambassador he may naturally have had his views somewhat biassed by his desire to attach us to his adopted country, and to alienate us from France.* But that minister also looked upon our existing alliance with Louis Philippe as one that was cherished by him solely for French purposes, and which he would never permit to be the parent of commercial treaties or of any other measures of benefit to England. And if Wellington objected to the conduct which the ministers were pursuing with regard to Belgium, he looked upon their policy in the Peninsula with even greater alarm. He repeated the opinion which he had expressed before, that, since Don Miguel had now granted the amnesty, which, if granted in 1830, would at once have procured

* Raikes, i., 193.

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his recognition from the Administration over which he himself had presided, the ministers ought to acknowledge him as the Sovereign of Portugal, which in fact he was, "so as to enable him to carry on the Govern-"ment with advantage to this country." The Ministry professed to preserve a neutrality between him and Don Pedro; but in reality they were assisting Don Pedro by keeping a British fleet in the Tagus, for that fleet was stationed there not to enable British subjects to quit the country in safety, but to afford them protection while they remained there; and, while the ministers avowed such a purpose, it was evidently placed in a hostile attitude towards the existing Government of Portugal, and must inevitably "have an effect on the "war prejudicial to that Government."

At the beginning of the next session he charged the ministers with a far greater violation of neutrality than that which they had committed by sending Admiral Parker to Lisbon; not only affirming, what indeed was well known, that numbers of British subjects were engaged in Don Pedro's service by their connivance, but undertaking to prove further, that after the Commissioners of the Customs, being aware that by the general law of the kingdom such an expedition was illegal, had "in the autumn of 1831 detained certain vessels in the "Thames, having on board the very troops, ammuni-"tion, and arms which had since been employed in "Don Pedro's service, they had been ordered by a "superior power to desist from such interference." There can be no doubt that these objections were well founded; that our proceedings at this time were wholly inconsistent with the neutrality which we professed to observe; that they did keep the flame of civil war alive in Portugal for a considerable period, and that, had it

not been for the unexpected turn which Admiral Napier's naval victory gave to it, there was too much reason to apprehend, as Wellington did, that the war would end in revolutionizing the whole country; in reducing Spain, already in a state of the most miserable confusion, to the same state; and in establishing French influence on the ruins of our own throughout both portions of the Peninsula.

At the end of the Session of 1832 the old Parliament was dissolved, in order to allow the newly-created constituencies to return representatives as soon as the registers had been made out. The result of the new elections, as might have been expected when the excitement attending upon the Reform Bill had not yet had time to subside, was to return an enormous majority disposed to support the ministers; and Wellington, as leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords, had a difficult task to discharge, knowing, as he did, that his party in the Lower House numbered little more than one hundred votes. In such a crisis the steadiness and dignity of his character were eminently conspicuous. Owing to his prudence in having averted the creation of Peers in the preceding year, he could still command a majority among the Lords; but that danger, though escaped, showed the necessity of wielding his power with moderation, a course at all times in accordance with his natural disposition; and, even had it not been so, easier to him than to other men from his entire indifference to the possession of official power.

He was likewise averse on principle to frequent changes in the Administration, and personally looked upon it as his duty to support the King's Government on the mere ground of its being the King's Govern-

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ment, whenever he conscientiously could do so. And actuated by this principle he supported the ministers in most of their measures; and especially in their Bill for the repression of outrages in Ireland, which had risen to such a height as to be not only ruinous to that country, but disgraceful to the whole United Kingdom. They were caused partly by th resistance to the payment of tithe, not very unnaturally encouraged by the Roman Catholic priests, and partly by the agitation for the repeal of the Union, which O'Connell was now diligently stirring up as his sole means of continuing to extract contributions for himself from those whom in the British Parliament he called his starving countrymen. The consequence was that, as the Duke declared, there existed "a perpetual con-"spiracy between the priests and demagogues of Ire-"land against the Government of that country." And in the preceding year he had earnestly and repeatedly pressed the ministers to renew the law against illegal associations, which was about to expire. They promised to do so, but neglected it, contenting themselves instead with prosecuting O'Connell, who pleaded guilty, but whom they never brought up for judgment, on the plea that the law under which he had been convicted had actually expired, as the Duke had warned them that it would, before they could do so. Their decision on that point was perhaps prudent, since a slight punishment would only have invested him with the character of a martyr, without having any effect in repressing the evils which he was causing; and a severe punishment the law had no power to inflict: but it was not strange that he himself looked upon their forbearance as a proof that they feared him, an idea which was increased by their presently giving him a patent of precedence at the

bar. Nor was it strange that the Duke complained to the House of Lords that this last honour was "a "premium to him to continue his course of disturbing "the country," and that he charged the ministers with being themselves "the main cause of the present ex- "citement by the encouragement which they had given "to agitators." He referred with reasonable triumph to the beneficial effect which the Tithe Composition Act of his own Administration had had in almost extinguishing disturbance on that subject; and affirmed that the revival of any disturbance was solely owing to the conduct of the present Government; and especially to "their treatment of the Protestants in "Ireland, who had been in all situations and under "all circumstances the firm friends of England, but "who were unanimous in their feelings against the "present Government from a sense of injury done to "them, and of insecurity." And while "he agreed "that it was desirable to widen the basis of the Union "as much as possible, he warned the ministers that in "order to maintain that Union inviolate it was abso- "lutely necessary to pay some attention to the feelings "of the Irish Protestants." But now that body saw their Church openly attacked, their clergy, partly from murderous attacks, partly from the withholding of their tithes, "in danger of utter destruction," while the ministers were taking but little care to protect either their rights or their lives.

The winter of 1832 saw the disturbances increased to a degree that seriously alarmed the Government, and caused Lord Grey to bring in a Bill which gave the Lord-Lieutenant power to suppress any meeting which appeared to him likely to be dangerous to the public peace; and to declare by proclamation any par-

ticular district to be in a disturbed state; (the effect of such a proclamation being to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, and to establish martial law in that district;) and the Duke cordially supported it, and by various suggestions did his best to render it more complete and efficient. In the same spirit he supported the ministerial measures respecting the renewal of the charters of the Bank of England and of the East India Company, though the terms of them were very different from those which he would have proposed himself had he continued in office; since his own intention had been to have renewed them with no other stipulation than that each company should pay the Crown a yearly sum of a hundred pounds* as an acknowledgment of the Royal supremacy, and of the right of the Crown to abrogate those charters should it ever seem advisable to do so. He also supported the Bill for the amendment of the Poor Law, candidly admitting that "no "plan had ever been suggested or scheme proposed "to remove and remedy the evils of the existing law "which, in his judgment, at all equalled that intro- "duced by the ministers, to whom he returned his "sincere thanks for their measure."

Nor did he oppose their measure for the abolition of slavery in our colonies, though in his judgment it had been introduced without any sufficient care having been taken either to induce the owners of land, and, as such, of slaves also, to acquiesce in it willingly, or to prepare the slaves themselves for the emancipation which was to be so suddenly offered to them. We have seen that almost from his first entrance into public life he had at all times manifested a most lively interest in the abolition of the slave trade, and in the condition

* Raikes, i., 90.

of the slaves. Wilberforce and Romilly had thankfully acknowledged his zeal in the cause to which they themselves were so devoted when he was employed on foreign embassies; and even in 1828, when, as head of the Administration, he had the management of the affairs of the whole empire upon his shoulders, he still found time to take the chair at public meetings of which the object was to ameliorate the condition of the negro, and to hasten the period of his liberation. One of the most unwearied advocates of the negro had been the Lord Chancellor Brougham, and perhaps it was partly at the instigation of his energetic will that the ministers, with a somewhat precipitate philanthropy, now recommended to Parliament to grant the munificent sum of twenty millions of money to the planters in the West Indies, as the purchase-money of all the slaves in their possession, who were at first to enjoy a modified freedom, being still bound to work as apprentices for a brief term of years, and then to be set wholly at liberty. If the question be looked at in an abstract point of view, there can be no question that, as keeping human beings in a state of slavery was now admitted to be a sin, their complete liberation should have instantly followed such an acknowledgment; but the Duke's practical mind, while it condemned the sin, could also feel for the planters, whose part in that sin had been sanctioned by such long usage, such undoubting acquiescence of Europeans in general, and so many Acts of Parliament. And though he fully concurred in the desirableness of giving freedom to the black population of our colonies with all practicable speed, showing indeed that as far back as 1823 Parliament had clearly come to a decision that such a measure should eventually be carried out, he contended that it had never been

meant to be adopted till it had been preceded by other measures tending to ameliorate the condition of the slave, and to educate him in some degree in order to fit him for the freedom designed for him. In fact, as he reminded the House, measures with that view had been enjoined by Orders in Council issued here, and had been cheerfully carried out to a great extent by many of the colonial legislatures; but he declared that since the accession to power of Lord Grey's Administration, the effect of those orders had been counteracted by others so ill conceived and ill drawn as to be perfectly impracticable; and as to have in a great degree undone the good produced by the previous orders.

He expressed great doubts whether when the slaves had been emancipated they would be found as willing to work for hire as the advocates of their liberation expected; and he insisted fairly that the burden of the proof of their willingness lay upon those advocates, and that they were not entitled to assume it as an axiom not to be questioned without the production of evidence the other way. Not that he was sure that such evidence could not be found in the state of affairs in Colombia, where the slaves had been emancipated, but where the liberated negroes, "though they did "labour for a while, after a few years refused to work "at all;" or in "Surinam, or in any other of the tropical "climates where free negroes were to be found," in all which countries he affirmed that they invariably showed the greatest indisposition "to work for hire, or for any "consideration whatever. In fact, their only idea of "work was to procure food, and having obtained that, "which in those climates required very little exertion, "they thought of nothing but reposing in listless idle-"ness beneath the shade." And he asserted also, that

the variations which the ministers themselves had at different times introduced into their original plan, proved that they themselves were in great uncertainty as to the effect of their measure.

He also pointed out other difficulties which must arise in the course of working out the ministerial plan; and further urged that the ministers appeared to have wholly left out of their consideration the probable effect which their measure might have upon the commerce of this country; since if it should turn out that the negroes when emancipated would not work, "there "could be no doubt whatever that an end must be "put to all the commerce which had been carried on "between the West Indian Islands and the mother "country, for so many years with so much advantage "not only to commerce itself but to navigation, to "our navy, to our political influence, in short, to every "circumstance which adds to the honour and glory of "the country," while we should also lose a great amount of revenue, which he doubted whether either the House or the Administration were prepared to risk. Still he would not oppose the resolutions which the ministers desired to pass as a foundation for the Bill which they proposed to introduce: indeed he admitted that, brought forward as they had been by the Government, with the consent of the colonial body in this country, and carried in the Lower House by great majorities, their rejection would be most mischievous; but he did suggest that the best means of carrying them into effect would be "to send them out to the colonies as resolutions unani-"mously agreed to by both Houses of Parliament, with "a recommendation to the Legislative Assemblies of "the different islands to adopt such measures as should "be necessary to carry them into execution. And

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" this," he thought, " would be the mode most likely to " conciliate the colonies, and best calculated to induce " them to lend their assistance towards the completion " of the plan." And indeed he affirmed that the colonies had already given indications of their willingness to adopt of their own accord such a measure as the Government was preparing to force upon them.

His deliberate opinion therefore was, that the wisest step would have been for ministers to have confined themselves at home to carrying resolutions in favour of emancipation, and to have left to the colonies themselves the credit of passing a law in adoption of that concession. He also thought that the conduct of the negroes in other countries " showed that it would have " been better to have postponed even those resolutions " a few years longer, until we had instructed the negroes " how to bear the change about to be made in their " condition." He moreover asserted as a matter beyond a doubt, that it had originally been the intention of Parliament to proceed very gradually in the adoption of such a change; and he disapproved greatly of the conduct of the Government on the subject, who " had brought the discussion to a state in which it was " impossible to recede, impossible to stand still, and " dangerous to move forward." Still, though condemning their conduct on these points, he would not oppose the Bill, but lent his diligent aid in committee to correcting such details of it as he thought most likely to impede its working; and then, though with many doubts, he consented to its third reading.

Whether any amount of previous education could have rendered the negro better qualified to bear so momentous a change in his condition, or whether his disinclination to work for more than the barest neces-

saries of life was wholly incurable, it may be difficult to decide. But very few can fail now to wish that the Duke's opinion had been acted upon, and that the measure of emancipation (imperiously as it was called for by every consideration of religion and of humanity, and glorious to the country as was the disregard of the vast cost at which it was adopted) had been delayed for a time while an attempt was made to render the slaves more fit for freedom, who considers the terrible injury which the measure then carried has inflicted upon our West Indian colonies, the produce of which it has greatly diminished; and also upon our own manufactures for and commerce with those colonies, which, as an inevitable consequence, have been lessened in a similar proportion; while at the same time the liberty thus bestowed has been far from an unmixed blessing to the negro race itself, since the diminution of the supply obtainable from our own islands has naturally led to increased exertions in those countries which adhere to slavery, and even to the slave trade; and since in consequence that atrocious traffic has been rather encouraged than checked by the indirect effects of our self-sacrificing humanity.

In the same spirit of supporting the Government whenever he could do so, he declined to oppose the ministerial Bill for the regulation of the revenue of the Established Church in Ireland; though he looked upon it as being in contradiction to all our former policy on the subject, and as having been caused solely by the conduct of the Government in that country, which had diminished, or, it might have almost been said, had destroyed the security of Church property of every kind which under his own administration had been amply protected. Some of the Peers, led by the Duke of New-

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castle on this subject, avowed their intention to oppose the Bill in all its stages, as incurably vicious in principle; but Wellington remonstrated against such a line of conduct with true statesmanlike wisdom, and the language which he now addressed to those noblemen is the more worthy of remark in that it affords the key to much of his own conduct. He said, that "if the world "were governed by principle, nothing would be easier "than for a man to conduct the greatest possible affairs; "but it was not so; and in all cases the choice a wise "man was confined to was to select the least of two "contending difficulties." He admitted that the measure before Parliament would reduce the revenues of the Irish Church, but he pointed out that in fact it was already, by the difficulty, in some districts amounting to an absolute impossibility, of collecting them at all, practically reduced to the enjoyment of an income far below that which this Bill would leave to it; and that therefore this Bill would in reality contribute to the relief of that Church, which without such a measure must be destroyed altogether. Was it, he argued irresistibly, worth while to inflict such injury, such entire destruction upon the Church of Ireland, that they might obtain the honour of having resisted to the last, and to fight for a principle to the total ruin of that for the good of which the principle was desired to be maintained? He considered that what he had to look to was not what was best for his own character of adherence to principle, but what was best for the Church; and that by consenting to a measure which secured the continued existence of that Church, though somewhat impaired in wealth and dignity, "he was best doing his "duty to it."

In one measure alone which was brought forward

in the year 1833 by the ministers (though not as a Cabinet measure) did the Duke offer an uncompromising opposition; and with respect to it his judgment and his conduct continued unchanged to the end of his life. We have already seen that, while consenting to the measure for the relief of the Protestant Dissenters, which was carried in 1828, he refused his sanction to an amendment which was designed to admit Jews into Parliament; not at that time entering into the objections which he entertained to such a step, but merely asserting it to be one of such importance that it ought to be brought fairly before Parliament and discussed separately, and not to be tacked in as an appendage to another measure with which it had in reality no connection.

Now however Mr. Charles Grant brought forward a Bill expressly formed to admit Jews into Parliament; he succeeded in carrying it in the House of Commons, and in the House of Lords it was energetically advocated by Lord Brougham and other Peers, not in every instance belonging to what had begun to be called the liberal party; but it was nobly withstood by some of the bishops, and very especially by Wellington, whose speech, though brief, placed the question on its proper footing, by irresistible arguments. He contended, in the first place, that it did not follow, because as the Chancellor had truly said there were some men whom no oaths could bind, and that some infidels had obtained seats in the House of Commons by taking the oath at present prescribed, though notoriously disregarding its obligations, that on that account "we should give up every test and "oath, and throw aside every guard for the maintenance "of Christianity in the country;" and secondly, that without entering into the question of the individual

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respectability of many Jews, those "who were not "Christians therefore ought not to be allowed to legis- "late for a Christian Church."

Always contented with what was sufficient for his present purpose, he did not carry his argument further; or else he might easily have shown that there was no analogy whatever between measures for removing restrictions from Christian Dissenters, whether Protestant or Roman Catholic, and from infidels with whom we have not even a name in common. In fact, the attempt to represent such measures as identical or even similar in principle, which is made by speaking of them as all equally enjoined by the principle of toleration, is founded on an entire misapplication of that term. A becoming humility and sense of our own fallibility as mortal men enjoin us to tolerate those who differ from us in opinion on any subject; because, in every case which is merely one of opinion, however strong and decided our individual convictions may be, we must confess the existence of a possibility that our antagonists may be right rather than ourselves. But there can be no such reason for affording similar indulgence to those who deny proved facts or revealed truths. With respect to such facts and truths our position is one not of opinion however decided, but of positive knowledge. The difference between us and Christian Dissenters, of whatever denomination they may be, is clearly one of opinion. They acknowledge the same Scriptures that we acknowledge; they differ from us only in the interpretation of certain passages in them, or in the manner of carrying out their injunctions. But the authority of these holy Scriptures is utterly denied by Jews and other infidels; (for it should never be forgotten that the admission of Jews to Parliament must carry with it the admission of the pro-

fessors of every infidel or pagan superstition on the face of the globe). Who would trust a steward of his estate who denied that two and two make four? And how can it be argued that in the still more important matter of legislation we should trust those who deny truths still more important than those of arithmetic?

The real question is simply this. As it cannot be denied that to legislate for a mighty empire is the most difficult and the most important duty which can possibly be entrusted to mortal man, is it possible to offer a greater insult to Christianity, and to God who in so stupendous a manner has revealed Christianity to us as a guide for our conduct in all the transactions of life, than would be offered by declaring that for the proper performance of that greatest of all human tasks it is a matter of perfect indifference whether a man be a Christian or not?

The Bill was thrown out by the Lords by a great majority. And we shall not perhaps be forming an undue estimate of the value of the Duke's resistance to it, if we reflect that it was not till after his death that the proposal of such a concession was renewed with any earnestness, and that then, for want of the guidance of his stedfast mind, a half-measure was allowed to pass, which in effect surrendered the whole matter in dispute, only limiting the concession by restrictions which from the first were practically inoperative, which are already beginning to be diminished, and which, we may be sure, will soon be wholly abrogated.

Throughout this trying time Wellington's disinterested and patriotic course was producing its natural effect in restoring him to his former well-deserved popularity among all classes. As was natural, the first demonstrations of the great esteem in which he was held

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proceeded from those the best qualified to form an estimate of his conduct and motives; and early in the year 1833, a committee was formed at Oxford to procure a bust of him to be placed in the great treasury of the University, its noble Bodleian library; the desire of its promoters being to mark the sense entertained by the University of his great civil virtues, and more especially of his exertions in the preceding year to form an Administration for the King when Lord Grey abandoned his office. On the wishes of the University being made known to him through the aged Lord Sidmouth, Wellington avowed himself, as he naturally felt, highly gratified with the compliment thus paid to him; and almost equally surprised, since he declared that "he "had not had an idea that any body of his country- "men approved of the course which he had taken in "1832."* And he once more explained the motive which had then actuated him to have been a reluctant sense of duty; since "he felt that his duty to the King "required that he should make a great sacrifice of "opinion to serve him, and to save both his Majesty "and the country from what he considered a great evil. "He had failed, and he had hitherto imagined that he "had satisfied no one but himself and those of his "friends who were aware of his motives." He then referred to his own feelings on hearing of the compliment intended him, expressing himself "not only per- "sonally gratified by the approbation of so distin- "guished a body, but grateful also as a public man, "and as a faithful subject of his Majesty, for the en- "couragement thus given to others to devote them- "selves to the King's service by their applause of the "course which he had followed on this occasion."

* See his letter to Lord Sidmouth.—'Life of Lord Sidmouth,' vol. iii., 437.

The compliment thus paid him was only the harbinger of a still more remarkable honour which was conferred on him the next year. At the beginning of 1834 died Lord Grenville, who had for many years filled the conspicuous office of Chancellor of the University. The succession to this post was the greatest honour which Oxford had to bestow; and, except when Oliver Cromwell in the plenitude of his power appropriated it to himself, it had always been jealously reserved for the noblest or most illustrious of her own sons. It had been gratefully accepted by Pole, the princely cardinal of Rome, and by Laud, the sincere and learned champion of the Church of England; by Leicester and Hatton, the worthless favourites of Elizabeth, as well as by Clarendon and Ormond, the loyal and fearless councillors of the second Charles. It had been won by the popular talents and high position of Lord North, before the facility of temper which made him so delightful a companion had by its weak compliance with measures which he disapproved lost his Sovereign the fairest jewel of his crown, his American colonies; it had been thought too high a prize for the profound learning and spotless integrity of Eldon.

On the decease of Lord Grenville the leading members of the University pondered anxiously on the question whom it might best become them to elect as his successor. Then, as always, Oxford could number in her calendar a proud array of splendid nobles, of profound lawyers, of eloquent orators, of high-minded statesmen. Nor among the Princes of the Blood (in whose favour alone had it been previously supposed that any exception could be made to the rule requiring that her Chancellor should have been trained in her schools) were there

wanting those who would have done honour to a choice which they would no doubt have reckoned among the most acceptable of their titles. The Duke of Sussex had long been conspicuous for his discerning patronage of science and literature; the Duke of Cambridge had gained a wider renown as the judicious governor of his brother's foreign kingdom, who by his enlightened administration had effaced all traces of the injury which it had received from the oppression of Napoleon and the exactions of his insatiable marshals, by his affability had endeared British rule to the people over whom he was placed, and by the practice of every domestic virtue throughout his life had recalled the bright example of his excellent father to the minds of the people among whom he was born, and of those among whom he had long resided as their ruler.

Of eminent men then not unworthy of so exalted an honour there were plenty; but the times were certainly critical, in the opinion of many, most perilous. And the leaders of the University felt that now it was desirable not only for its honour, but perchance even for its safety, to place at its head the most illustrious of their countrymen. One bold voice named the Duke of Wellington, and in a moment almost the whole University and the whole kingdom with one loud acclamation pronounced for the propriety of the selection. True, he was neither a son of her training, nor a royal prince; but he had crowned twenty years of military glory won in the service of his country by the glorious overthrow of the enemy of the world. Since that time, as head of the Government at home, he had shown himself a discerning and fearless friend of religious freedom, carrying one great measure, of which, though at the time opposed to it, Oxford now recog-

nized the wisdom and the necessity; while by his great exploits in the field of administrative reform he had won the praise of even vehement political opponents. Still more lately, as leader of the Opposition, he had established for himself a yet firmer hold on her esteem and regard by his resistance to measures of which she still dreaded the effects, and by his steady defence of the interests of the Established Church and of Christianity. What was more than either of these great claims, he had shown that whether on the field of battle or at the council board, he neither warred nor counselled for himself, nor ever was actuated by any other feeling than how he might best serve the King whom he honoured, and the country which he loved.

It would have been most unnatural for the Duke, who had been so much pleased at the request for his bust, to have felt otherwise than greatly flattered at so unprecedented and unexpected a compliment from a body held in such deserved veneration. Yet his gratification, which he did not conceal, did not incline him to grasp eagerly at the honour thus proffered to him; but with his habitual impartiality of judgment and disregard of self, he pointed out to the deputation which waited upon him to intimate the wish of the University, and to solicit his consent to gratify it, that in his opinion the fact of his "not having had," as he expressed himself, "the advantage of having been educated at Oxford" disqualified him for the office. He urged upon them that the critical nature of the times, which he felt more deeply perhaps than any of them, made it the more imperative on them to select as the head of their University, and in virtue of that character as their champion in Parliament, some one whose personal acquaintance with its discipline, and usages, and laws would enable him to

defend it with an effect to which he himself could not pretend. He pointed out to them also that their rolls contained the names of many nobles possessed of the qualifications which he had pointed out, and by the distinctions which they had gained at the University, and by their subsequent reputation in the senate, abundantly deserving the confidence which was now proposed to be placed in himself, and far better calculated than himself to requite that confidence by useful service. He therefore strongly recommended them to reconsider their decision, and to select in preference some one who had been educated at Oxford.

Reconsideration however did not alter the desire formed by those whose esteem for his past career was perhaps strengthened by an expectation that the University would find in him her most efficient defender against the assaults to which they foresaw that she would be exposed; and as they persisted in their request that he would accept the office, he yielded his own judgment and consented, and was elected Chancellor without opposition; not indeed without some disinclination on the part of a small body of reformers in the University, of a high reputation for virtue and ability, though weak in point of numbers, in whose eyes the resolute stand which they in common with his partisans expected him to make for the maintenance of the existing state of affairs in the University, was probably very far from being a recommendation. They however were aware that if the Duke were once formally announced as a candidate, no Tory would stand against him, and also that whether he were so announced or not, no Whig could be put forward with the slightest possibility of success; and in this dilemma they turned their views towards Sir Robert Peel, since that statesman by the able

resistance which he had recently made to the Reform Bill had in a great degree re-established himself in the good opinion of even the most extreme supporters of old customs; while his general conduct proved him not unlikely to be induced to look with approval on many of the innovations which the advocates of university reform were contemplating; and not having been admitted behind the scenes of political life, they fancied that it might be possible to induce the Duke to withdraw his name in favour of one who in the recent debates in the House of Commons had shown such a similarity of opinion with respect to reform with that which the Duke himself had declared, and as long as was possible had acted on.

They therefore addressed themselves to Wellington, setting forth Peel's claims on the University, as having gained its highest honours while an under-graduate; as having fulfilled by his later renown the promise which he then gave of future excellence; and above all, as having incurred the loss of his seat as representative of the University by his consent to Wellington's measure for the relief of the Roman Catholics; and entreating the Duke to withdraw his pretensions to the Chancellorship in his favour. Had they been aware of the truth, they would have known that the Duke's estimate of Peel had recently been much lowered by that statesman's refusal in 1832 to aid him to form a Ministry, which being based wholly on personal reasons, such as a regard for his own consistency, Wellington considered very much at variance with real patriotism or loyalty, and which had produced a temporary coolness between them, which was not wholly effaced till the Duke's judgment of his ability to lead the House of Commons induced him at the end of 1834 to recommend him to

the King as Prime Minister, and to express his own willingness to serve under him in that capacity. Not that it follows, because Wellington was deserving of the highest praise for his conduct in 1832, that therefore Peel was properly blamable for declining to imitate it. A reputation for political consistency and honesty is so valuable that no one can afford lightly to imperil it: Peel had already given his one severe wound by his change of opinion on the Catholic question, his opposition to which he had rashly based upon principles from which, if he believed in them, it was hard for even the most imperious State necessity to justify him in swerving; and not only could he not afford another recantation so speedily; but it may also be said that probably no one but Wellington ever stood on such vantage-ground as to have been able, without any diminution of the permanent esteem in which he was held, to show a willingness to take office for the purpose of carrying a measure of which he confessedly disapproved. At the moment however, if the Duke had been inclined to withdraw his consent to become Chancellor, probably Peel was not exactly the person in whose favour he would have been most inclined to waive his pretensions. But he felt that, after having met the first offer of the post, not with a refusal, but with a statement of the objections which he himself perceived to such an appointment, and with a consequent request to the heads of the University to reconsider the desire which they had expressed, since upon reconsideration they had decided on persevering in it, it was out of his power to draw back; and therefore in a very courteous letter to Peel's partisans, and with expressions of high consideration for that gentleman, he declined acceding to their proposition, which indeed he felt sure

that they themselves on perusal of his letter would see to be inadmissible.*

No other name therefore was publicly proposed; the Duke was unanimously elected to the office, and at the ensuing commemoration in June he was formally installed. The visit of the Prince Regent with his imperial and royal guests to the University twenty years before was of course still vivid in the recollection of many who bore a part in the present ceremony; but they all agreed that the splendour of that occasion, and the joy displayed at the honour done to Oxford by the visit of such an unprecedented assemblage of sovereigns and statesmen as were then gathered within her walls, heightened as it was by the exultation at the re-establishment of peace, in which we as a nation had played so triumphant a part, faded into insignificance when compared with the magnificence and enthusiasm which now greeted the arrival, as the head of the University, of him whose absence had made the former pageant appear imperfect. On the Monday a vast cavalcade issued forth to escort the great captain and statesman into Alfred's ancient city, and expecting to meet a superb carriage, nearly passed him without notice, as in a plain britchka and pair, unadorned by heraldic device, but covered with dust, he drove on in the most unpretending guise. As the Vice-Chancellor of the year was Dr. Rowley, the head of University College, it was in his house that he remained during his stay, and the next morning the authorities of that college were as much disconcerted as his Monday's escort, when at seven o'clock the new Chancellor punctually presented

* See the letter itself, addressed to the Rev. W. Hayward Cox, now Archdeacon of Hereford, to whom I am obliged for the communication of it, in the Appendix.

himself in chapel, the service of which, while the higher dignitaries of the college were still preparing by protracted slumbers for the labours of the day, was as usual attended by but a few half-dressed under-graduates, and performed in a most perfunctory manner by a single chaplain. The next three days were days of continued and universal festivity. Banquets of every kind, breakfasts, luncheons, dinners, and balls at many of the different colleges, public balls and concerts on the most extensive scale, were thronged by crowds that made all movement at or departure from them impossible, and entrance to them only too easy.* But the principal scene of magnificence was reserved for the theatre, the splendid gift to the University of a former Chancellor, Archbishop Sheldon, in which for three days all the members of the University who could force their entrance into it collected to see their new Chancellor bestow honorary degrees on a chosen body of friends, numbering among them many of his bravest Peninsular warriors, who had come to receive and to do him honour by their attendance.

But the gowns which graced the theatre on this occasion were not all the work of a High Street robemaker, and many of the caps on which graduate as well as under-graduate eyes gazed most willingly and most long, at least till Wellington entered, were surmounted not with silver or golden tassels, but by bonnets of varied hue, glistening above the loveliest faces of Britain's aristocracy. 'For as woman's smile, the best and meetest

* A farmer who looked in at the door of the Star where the first ball was held, was carried by the stream of guests, top-boots and all, and redolent of the onions of the farmer's ordinary, to the further end of the room, among the ladies-patronesses, while the Duke of Cumberland could only effect his departure from the same room by having a ladder let down into it, by which he ascended into the orchestra, and so gained a private passage.

tribute to man's prowess, had never been withheld from Wellington's warlike achievements, it now came with equal fitness to grace his peaceful triumph; and the long semicircle of seats which surrounded the spacious hall was occupied by many of the noblest and fairest matrons and damsels of the land, mingled with some foreign dames of high distinction eager to witness a spectacle which their own countries could show nothing to resemble. The floor of the hall was densely thronged by those whose education had in former times been completed beneath its shade; the galleries were packed with equal closeness by those still under the mild and wise training of the University, who on this occasion overlooked the presence of their rulers, and made the walls and roofs ring with continued acclamations, now poured forth in honour of the beauty of their fairer visitors, now excited by the sight of some college authority of prominent renown whether for good or evil; often echoing the name of their venerated High Steward, the aged Lord Eldon, or of others of his political friends as the champions of Protestant and Tory ascendency; not unfrequently, it must be confessed, in yells of contempt and momentary hate of various leaders of the Whig party. But when at the appointed hour Wellington himself appeared at the head of a long procession, tutors and statesmen were alike forgotten;

> To him each lady's look was lent,
> On him each manly eye was bent,

and the whole theatre burst out in one spontaneous long-continued cheer, such as he himself might perhaps have heard before when he first met the eye of his army on the heights of Sauroren,* or when his veterans charged in final triumph down the slopes of Waterloo,

* See vol. i., p. 451.

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but such as had never before been echoed by the peaceful groves of Oxford, and which can never be forgotten by those who heard it as youthful sharers in the enthusiastic exultation of that day.

Wellington himself had been forced to make preparations for the ceremony of an unusual kind, and to arm himself with a Latin oration, which, when he first heard that such an effort would be required of him, he pronounced quite beyond his powers. After a while however, recollecting that medical prescriptions were written in Latin, he applied to his physician* to compose him a suitable speech in that language, which he now administered with great gravity, and which his audience willingly took without examining its language with their usual severity of criticism. The applause which it received was given rather to the speaker than to the speech; but the case was reversed when the Professor of Civil Law, Dr. Phillimore, acting on this occasion as the mouthpiece of the University, addressed him in return in a long harangue, which as often as the mention of one of his victories or the name of one of his comrades now present in his retinue struck upon the ear, called forth a reiteration of the cheers which were renewed again and again as the new Chancellor in the formal Latin phrase, "Placet-ne vobis Domini Doctores, placet-ne vobis Magistri,"† asked the consent of the University to confer its degrees on the various expectants of that honour.

* Raikes, iv., 293. The Duke apparently did not recognize the difference between the various styles of composition as fully as an old woman in Devonshire, who once came to the writer to explain some paper to her, qualifying her request with a statement that she was not sure whether it was Parson's Latin or Doctor's Latin which he understood, but she did hear that he understood one or the other.

† Do you consent, Doctors? Do you consent, Masters of Arts?

The celebrated caricaturist H. B. made the procession as it approached the door of the theatre the subject of a serious picture; but he might have found more appropriate scope for his peculiar talent if he had transferred to his stone a likeness of some of the figures which for the next day or two diversified the appearance of the ancient city, setting at defiance all proctorial laws regarding University costume, and giving a new version of Cicero's boast—

Cedant arma togæ,

by veiling the splendour of a hussar uniform beneath the more sober-looking gown of a doctor of laws; or, anticipating the detective resources of the present day, he might have aided the efforts of justice by portraits of others who, without waiting for the Chancellor's sanction to assume an academical costume, invested themselves with it by their own authority, concealing an appearance well known to the London police beneath the guise of country parsons, attracted from distant counties by the unwonted splendour of the pageant, levied heavy contributions on the pockets of the multitude which from morning to night blockaded every street which might afford a chance of obtaining a passing view of the Duke and his companions.

CHAPTER LI.

Wellington opposes motions for the admission of Dissenters to the Universities —Lord Grey retires—Lord Melbourne becomes Prime Minister—His Government is dissolved.

EVEN before he had been formally installed as Chancellor, Wellington had acknowledged the claims which the University had upon him to be her champion, by making vigorous protests against any interference with her laws, or those of her sister University of Cambridge, as regarded the admission of Dissenters to the advantages hitherto reserved for members of the Established Church, on two occasions offered by the presentation of petitions on both sides of the question by Lord Grey and the Duke of Gloucester, who was Chancellor of Cambridge; and before the end of the session, on a formal motion made by Lord Radnor to interfere by parliamentary enactment to alter those laws. The rules of Cambridge differed in one respect from those of Oxford; at the latter University, subscription to the Articles was required of her members on their first admission; but at the former it was not demanded till they were about to receive a degree, and consequently at Cambridge Dissenters could, and occasionally did, obtain the benefits of an University

education, though they were not allowed to participate in her honours or in those more substantial advantages to which a degree was a requisite preliminary. But, as the Duke truly stated, the difference between them was apparent rather than real, and the same principle applied to both.

The arguments adduced for the admission of Dissenters were as various as the speakers. Lord Grey, who was still Prime Minister when he presented the petition in favour of it, to a certain degree begged the question by speaking of their existing exclusion as a grievance; and had recourse to a palpable fallacy when he argued that no harm could ensue to the Established Church from the abolition of religious tests in the Universities, because those who had signed the petition in its favour were men of too high a character to be suspected of any intention to injure it: as also when he contended that the tests which he sought to abolish were no part of the ancient constitution of either University, having been originally imposed in the reign of James I.; an argument to which the obvious answer was that before that era Dissent had been looked upon as heresy, and that the question could not well arise whether those persons should be admitted to the University who, by the avowal of their religious doctrines, would have incurred the risk of being burnt alive. But he argued more plausibly, as far as Cambridge was concerned, that there was some inconsistency in allowing Dissenters to enrol themselves in her calendar; and when for some years they had submitted to her discipline, obeyed her regulations, perhaps had shown themselves diligent and deserving pupils, then at the last hour refusing them the reward of their dutiful labour and obedience. Though even this argument was open to the reply, that if Dissenters were admitted they were not

known to be such; that in fact, by attending the services of the Established Church they practically disclaimed such a character; and moreover, that the opportunity afforded to them of receiving the benefits of such an education as the University bestowed was a substantial benefit deserving to be thankfully acknowledged, rather than a delusive boon to be complained of as having been turned into a grievance by the subsequent refusal of University honours and privileges when the true character of the candidate for such had become known.

Lord Radnor having no genius for argument, had recourse chiefly to abuse. Being an Oxford-man he directed his attack principally against her and against her scholars; declaring the present system of subscribing to the articles disgraceful both to her and to the subscribers; all of whom, though he admitted that he himself had at a former day been one of the number, he pronounced guilty of "a lie, "a positive lie," such as entitled people to entertain doubts of their veracity ever afterwards. Lord Melbourne, who had lately succeeded Lord Grey at the Treasury, while he supported the abolition of the religious tests, took occasion to declare his sincere attachment to, and his desire to uphold the Established Church, and sought to prove Dissent entitled to indulgence by a reference to the time when the doctrines against which the chief ecclesiastical authorities thought it needful to warn the Universities were "the damnable and pernicious errors "of John Wicliffe."

Wellington, discussing the question at some length, paid no attention to the violent language of Lord Radnor, and but little to the successor of Lord Grey. He asserted with undeniable truth, that, in spite of one or two petitions bearing the names of a few men of unquestioned eminence, the vast majority of each University was

adverse to any alteration of its laws upon the subject in question. He pointed out that admission to a degree would involve the admission of the graduates "to a share "in the government of the University," which would place them in "a situation with respect to the education "of the youth, and especially of the clergy of this "country, which even Lord Grey himself had not ven- "tured to describe as desirable." He pronounced with some reason that such a measure must be fatal "to the "union of Church and State," aye, and also "to the "existence of Christianity;" (laying himself open by this last assertion, as he also did when he called the Thirty-nine Articles "the Articles of Christianity," to the charge of overstating his argument, as if there were no Christianity out of the pale of the Church of England;) with greater practical soundness he proceeded to justify Cambridge in respect of the time at which she required the adhesion of her members to the Church of England, as having selected the moment when those who were to be retained in her bosom would become entitled to a share in her government as a chartered corporation. He was aware, he said, that it had been contended that the statutes on this point could in neither University prevent the admission of schismatics or even of Atheists; but he asserted that in both they prevented the entrance of any considerable number of such persons, and hindered them too, if they did obtain admittance, from "endeavouring "to introduce their schisms or their impiety among "others."

He showed further that "the admission of Dissenters "to degrees would be completely destructive of the whole "system of collegiate discipline and education," since it would be impossible to enforce upon them an attendance on the different religious services at present

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required of the youthful members of the University; and if these wholesome rules were relaxed in the case of a portion of those members, they must ultimately be relaxed in the case of all. And in conclusion, referring once more to the union of Church and State, he contended (and the view which he here expressed he practically maintained whenever any questions concerning ecclesiastical discipline or reform came before Parliament) that those took a very narrow view of it who "looked upon it "only as a sort of political connection, giving his Majesty "the power of conferring ecclesiastical dignities and pre-"ferments. In his opinion we ought to regard the union "of Church and State as a bond of a much higher order. "He considered that there was a spiritual union between "the Sovereign and the Church: his Majesty being by "Act of Parliament declared to be the supreme head "of the Church on earth, and by the same Act being "authorized to visit all colleges, schools, and similar in-"stitutions of royal foundation, and being required to "prevent in them those very schisms, dissensions, and "disorders which a measure like that under discussion "would be likely to engender. By that Act he considered "that the King was bound to see that in those Univer-"sities the true doctrines of the Gospel, the doctrines of "the Church of England, were maintained and taught, "and nothing else." He contended further, that the Coronation oath, by which the King "had sworn to "maintain the laws of God, and the true religion of the "Gospel," must prevent him from giving his assent to such a Bill as that now proposed. And that therefore "it was impossible for the House of Peers to request his "assent to it, knowing that it went to overturn every "principle contained in his oath." The Bill was rejected by an overwhelming majority; and, though the Duke's

last argument, based on the Coronation oath taken by the Sovereign, was manifestly vicious, being in fact the very same which in reference to the Catholic question had been deservedly discarded, it being then established by universal consent that the oath could not bind and had never been intended to bind the Sovereign in his legislative capacity; his other reasoning was not only sound and forcible, but admirable also for the high ground on which it placed the question, and for the deep feeling of reverence for pure religion which it displayed. Nor was this feeling assumed or temporary; on the contrary, as he advanced in life he constantly evinced a very deep interest in religious matters; and theological works, and especially commentaries on the Bible, were among his most favourite studies. The attack upon the Universities was renewed with some variety of form in several subsequent Sessions; and on all occasions it met with the same resistance from the Duke. It was in vain that its advocates, when failing to bewilder him with their arguments, often tried to smooth away his opposition by reference to "the wise and tolerant policy of his own Admi-"nistration, and to his successful promotion of the cause of "civil and religious liberty," and by professions that, in their recommendation of the measures which they advocated, they were only seeking to follow in his steps. He was as proof against their flatteries as against their sophistries; and never abandoned the doctrine "that it "is absolutely necessary that the Universities, founded "as they are, should educate their members in the re-"ligion of the Church of England."

In the same spirit he opposed the proposition made a few years afterwards by the same parties to enable the Crown to appoint a commission to inquire into the statutes of the Universities, and of the different Colleges

of which they were made up; and he was able to do this with the greater effect since, being aware that some evils did really exist, and that some of the statutes were not only obsolete, but, in the present age, impracticable, he had soon after his installation taken upon himself to recommend to the chief authorities at Oxford a consideration of those evils and of those objectionable laws with a view to the revision of the one and the removal of the other; and since he was able also to inform the Peers that those whom he had thus addressed had taken his advice, and were diligently prosecuting the improvements which he had suggested.

Greatly therefore are those mistaken who have represented him as inclined to protect ancient abuses. It is more true to say that as his own Government had been pre-eminently distinguished for the vigour and extent of the Administrative Reforms which it inaugurated and executed, so he was at all times a most vigilant corrector of practical abuses, though very careful to avoid violating ancient principles, which in his judgment were not necessarily condemned because in process of time defects or errors had insinuated themselves into the mode in which they were carried out. With respect to the particular innovation pressed so earnestly by the extreme liberal and latitudinarian party, namely, the admission of Dissenters to the Universities, his objections appear eminently well founded, since it is self-evident that the existence of a variety of sects among the under-graduates must be totally incompatible with religious training of any kind. And if it was desirable that those who had submitted to a regular course of academical training, and had attained a certain degree of proficiency in the branches of study to which they had devoted themselves, should be allowed to receive degrees as a proof of that proficiency, it certainly

was better (as Lord Brougham argued from the objections made by Oxford and Cambridge to admitting them to theirs) that some other University should be chartered, with power to confer degrees, which, though never, or at least not for many years likely to be held in equal estimation with those of the more ancient foundations, might be of some value, not only as mere honorary distinctions, but also as giving their possessors a more creditable entrance into those professions for which theological orthodoxy was not an indispensable qualification.

But before Lord Radnor's Bill was defeated, Lord Grey's Administration, as such, had ceased to exist. From the commencement of the session of 1834 it had been known that it was divided against itself in a manner which rendered its existence for any lengthened period impossible; and before the end of May, when a majority of the Cabinet determined on supporting a proposition made by Mr. Ward, the member for St. Albans, to deprive the Established Church in Ireland of a considerable portion of its revenues, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Ripon, Mr. Stanley,* and Sir James Graham resigned their offices. Such a blow was almost fatal to the existence of the Ministry; for Mr. Stanley was by far the ablest debater among the Whigs in the House of Commons, and Sir James Graham was the minister who of the whole Cabinet had displayed the highest amount of administrative ability. Mr. Stanley was replaced at the Colonial Office by Mr. Spring Rice,† and Sir James Graham at the Admiralty by Lord Auckland; and for a while the Administration went on, though sorely weakened by such a change. But a month afterwards fresh divisions, more dangerous because more

* Now Earl of Derby. † Now Lord Monteagle.

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discreditable, again forced themselves into notoriety. As a Bill for the repression of disturbances in Ireland, which had been passed in 1833 for one year, was on the point of expiring, it became necessary to re-enact one with a similar object, and Mr. Littleton, (who in the preceding year had succeeded Mr. Stanley as Irish Secretary when that statesman had accepted the seals of the Colonial Office,) with the connivance of Lord Althorp, though without the slightest suspicion on the part of Lord Grey, had entered into communications on the subject with Mr. O'Connell, of such a nature that O'Connell, to whom it was a strange novelty to have any communication whatever with a gentleman of Mr. Littleton's station, and a still greater novelty to find himself with a reasonable cause of complaint, had but too much reason to charge, as he did charge, Mr. Littleton with having deceived him. A strange and complicated series of intrigues followed, which, whenever they shall be unravelled, will not probably tend much to the credit of any of the parties concerned except Lord Grey. Accusations were made and withdrawn; Lord Althorp resigned his office; other resignations were offered and refused, accepted and retracted, till at last Lord Grey, himself perplexed, wearied, and disgusted, begged the King's permission to retire from his post, and looked upon his Administration as wholly broken up. His view of the state of affairs was shared as a matter of course by the rest of the kingdom, when to his astonishment, as well as to the amazement of all people used to straightforward conduct, it appeared that his retirement had reunited the rest of the Cabinet. There was no more talk of resignation; those who had resigned resumed their places; Lord Melbourne, quitting the Home Office, became First Lord of the Treasury, and, it was confidently believed,

insulted his former chief by requesting, through the Lord Chancellor, him to give the new Ministry his countenance by his acceptance of the Privy Seal.*

Such was not the arrangement which the King himself would have preferred. Lord Grey on resigning his post had recommended his Majesty to send for the Duke; but William IV. leant rather to the idea of effecting a coalition between the leaders of both parties, and conceived that such an union would be easily brought about by Lord Melbourne,† who, though possessed of no great range of information, extremely indolent, and fond of setting his unfitness for important trust in the worst light by an affectation of unnatural indifference to its duties, was nevertheless in natural capacity superior to most of his colleagues, and was also likely to be not unacceptable to the Tory leaders, being generally looked upon as one of Canning's school, and even having for a time held office under Wellington. But the views which he and his colleagues had recently developed had rendered any union with the Tories hopeless; so indeed he felt, and so he expressed himself to his Majesty; nor, when by the King's desire he opened a communication with the Duke and with Peel, did he himself express the slightest wish for their co-operation. The Tory leaders coincided with him; and while they agreed with one another that in the event of "his Majesty requiring their "assistance without any condition as to union with others "of different political principles" it would be their duty

* Raikes, i., 265.

† Horace Walpole's character of Lord North, though Lord Melbourne's abilities were not of quite as high an order as those of his unlucky predecessor, is singularly applicable to the later minister: "He was indolent, good-humoured, void of affectation of dignity, void of art: and his parts and the goodness [by which Walpole apparently means *amiability*] of his character would have raised him much higher in the opinion of mankind if he had cared either for power or applause."—Walpole's 'Last Journals,' i., 86.

not to withhold it, they separately addressed to their Sovereign a written comment on Lord Melbourne's communication, conveying their opinion that an union of their party with his present ministers "could not, in the "present state of parties and the present position of "political affairs, hold out the prospect of an efficient "and vigorous Administration."* The royal project of a coalition therefore fell to the ground, and the sole result of the complications when they were at length disentangled was the substitution at the Treasury of Lord Melbourne for Lord Grey, and the replacement of Lord Melbourne at the Home Office by Lord Duncannon.

Lord Grey announced his retirement to the House of Lords in a speech which would have carried his audience with him had he forborne a covert censure on the Government which had preceded him. It was hardly gracious in him to do so, even had his censure been deserved; for at first, oppressed with the sense of the unworthy treatment he had met with from his former colleagues, he faltered in a way strange indeed in so eloquent a speaker, and was wholly unable to address the Peers, till the Duke kindly interposing, and presenting a few petitions, gave him time to recover himself. Having recovered his composure, he rose again, narrated briefly and plainly the causes which had led to his resignation; spoke with not unnatural pride of the redemption of his pledge to give the people the reform which they had desired, and with sanguine hope of the benefits which he anticipated from that measure; boasted of the retrenchments which his Government had effected with rather less reason, since the revenue had been greatly diminished by them; and, in a tone still less borne out by the facts, of the manner in which he had preserved peace;

* Peel's Memoirs, ii., 1–13.

declaring that, on his entrance into office "he had found "the country in a most difficult state as regarded its "foreign policy; but that now when quitting the Go- "vernment he had secured for it a far greater probability "of peace than had then existed."

His language on this last subject called up the Duke,* who, after a brief condemnation of the conduct of those who had broken up Lord Grey's Administration by "entering into communication with one who ought "never to have been confided in," justified his own Government most successfully from the charges which the fallen minister had insinuated against it; retorted a general statement which Lord Grey had made of the country having been in a perilous state of excitement in 1830, not only by a reference to the means then employed to excite it, "all the populous towns having been "continually paraded by large bodies of men having "political objects in view," but also by the special assertion, easily to be proved or to be disproved, that "during "the three years and a half that Lord Grey had been in "office, more blood had been shed in popular disturb- "ances than during the fifty previous years since the "Gordon riots." The declaration that peace was now more secure than in 1830 he met with a counter assertion that, "in point of fact Europe was now in a far "more unsettled state than at that period;" and he attributed this to the conduct of the Noble Earl "in not "maintaining his pledge of non-intervention. So far "from it there was no country in Europe," he asserted, "which did not complain of the interference of this "country in its affairs. We had interfered by the part

* The Duke's speech on this, as well as on several other important occasions about this time, is omitted in the collected edition of his speeches published by Murray in 1854, but is to be found in Hansard.

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"which we had taken in the quadruple alliance: we had "interfered in Spain and in Portugal, and in every "instance our interference had brought about dangerous "or calamitous results." Of Lord Grey himself he spoke with great personal respect, avowing that "he had always "been anxious to support him, and had never opposed "him but with pain." In so doing he was only acting up to the principles which he had laid down for himself from the beginning, namely, that of supporting the King's Government whenever he possibly could. But his adoption of this principle only renders the case the stronger against any minister whom he opposed, since it makes it clear that when he did so he was acting only from a sense of duty superior even to that of obedience to the King, the duty of considering first the dictates of honour and the interests of his country.

Both he and Lord Grey spoke of the dissolution of the Administration as complete; both being men of far too straightforward a character to imagine beforehand the juggling by which it was to be re-established. But in its new shape it was doomed from the commencement. It had lost some character by the fact of having got rid of Lord Grey: it had lost all character by the way in which it had arrived at that end. The Duke continued rigidly to abstain from all factious opposition, supporting the new minister in his Bill for the amendment of the Poor Law; voting with him again in opposition to a motion made by his own personal friend Lord Londonderry, the effect of which would have been to bring on a discussion upon the affairs of the Peninsula, which in his opinion would needlessly and injuriously have embarrassed the Government; and only once offering him such a slight opposition as consisted in proposing an amendment to the modified Irish Coercion Bill, which

was all that Lord Melbourne dared to introduce, the object of his amendment being to restore to the Bill the same efficiency which it had possessed in the preceding year, and of which Lord Grey had refused to consent to deprive it; but still the Administration fell daily lower and lower in public estimation. In Ireland the scenes of daily outrage and defiance of the law assumed a more dangerous character than ever. O'Connell continued his agitation, and published letters to Lord Duncannon full of abuse and contempt of what he called "the follies, the "faults, and the crimes of the Whigs in Ireland;" and not content with agitating for the repeal of the Union, proclaimed his desire to aid the ministers in carrying out the desire which he ascribed to them of "converting the "House of Peers into an elective senate, subject to the "necessary control of public opinion;" while Dr. M'Hale, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Tuam, published a letter which he addressed to the Duke, denouncing the payment of tithes to the Established Church in that country in language which did not fall very short of actual sedition, but of which the ministers took no notice.

The King viewed these events with undisguised alarm, and was believed to have been even more offended personally by the conduct of the Lord Chancellor, who made a tour through Scotland in the autumn, attending numerous banquets and public meetings of various descriptions, and in the speeches which he delivered taking every opportunity of showing his disagreement with and contempt for the greater part of his colleagues, and making a parade of his intimacy with the King, which had its chief foundation in the warmth of his own after-dinner imagination.

While these occurrences were awakening dissatisfaction in the royal mind, Lord Spencer died, and Lord

Althorp, who by that event became a member of the House of Peers, was of course rendered incapable of retaining the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. As, though he was a nobleman of high character, and one held in very general esteem by both parties, he was a man of the most moderate possible abilities, and had not shown himself a very skilful or successful financier, it seems strange that any Administration that could go on with him should have found any difficulty in going on without him; but the want of his aid in the House of Commons was sufficient to break up Lord Melbourne's Government. William IV. was at Brighton, and thither on the 14th of November the Prime Minister repaired, to propose to his Majesty to substitute Lord John Russell for Lord Althorp, both as Chancellor of the Exchequer and as leader of the House of Commons; but when questioned by the King with especial reference to measures affecting the Irish Church, such as that which had caused the secession of Mr. Stanley and his friends from Lord Grey's Government, and to which his Majesty had an insuperable objection; and also regarding the further dissensions which such measures might create in the Cabinet, Lord Melbourne did not conceal his belief that dissensions would inevitably arise in the Administration on that subject in the course of the next session; nor did he express any confidence in his being able to surmount the difficulties which he, as well as the King, foresaw must be the consequence of such divisions. He himself had probably no great objection to being relieved from the necessity of attempting so arduous a task, and on his return to London was himself the bearer of a note desiring the attendance of the Duke at Brighton, to give the King his advice as to the future arrangements thus rendered necessary.

CHAPTER LII.

The Duke takes temporary charge of the Government—Peel returns from Italy, and becomes Prime Minister—The Duke is attacked in Parliament for his conduct: defends himself successfully—The Ministry is defeated in several divisions, and resigns—Lord Eliot's mission to Spain.

WELLINGTON was at Strathfieldsaye, but on the receipt of the royal mandate the next morning, he at once repaired to Brighton. The dissolution of the late Ministry did not take him altogether by surprise, but even if it had done so, he was not likely to be backward in placing his services at the disposal of his Sovereign. As it was, he obeyed the call with joy, entertaining, as he did, a deep-felt conviction that the projects which the late Administration had spontaneously cherished, as well as those to which they would inevitably have been driven to consent, were wholly incompatible with the continued existence of the British Constitution; he was moreover very confident that the most valuable portion of the community estimated the defunct Government as he did himself, and very sanguine that the result of a dissolution of Parliament, which in the past summer he had agreed with Peel in considering indispensable, would afford abundant proof of the harmony of the feelings of the people in general with his own. On his arrival at Brighton he had an immediate conference with the King. King William's

wish was that he should resume the post which he had resigned four years previously; but Wellington, never allowing his personal dignity to interfere with the more weighty considerations of what was best for the State, represented to his Majesty* "that the chief difficulty of "the task of the Administration about to be formed "would consist in the state of the House of Commons, "and therefore he advised him to choose his first mi- "nister from among the members of that House of Parlia- "ment, and recommended Peel" (who indeed was alone capable of conducting the business of the Government in that assembly) "as the person to be so selected." It happened however that Peel was abroad; having gone to Italy about a month before, without any expectation of being so speedily required in England, though it was known that Lord Spencer's health was in a very precarious state; and it was obvious, supposing the King to acquiesce in Wellington's arguments, as he at once did, that all definitive arrangements must be suspended till Peel could return. Meanwhile, since Lord Melbourne's cabinet was in fact dispossessed, it was indispensable that the King should have a minister, and accordingly the Duke offered, as a temporary arrangement, to hold the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Home Secretary till Peel's return; while the Great Seal, having been taken from Lord Brougham, who was most unwilling to relinquish it, was entrusted to a commission at the head of which was Lord Lyndhurst. And the Duke wrote to Peel a full account of all that had taken place, earnestly requesting his instant return to England, and explaining to him that all the arrangements which he had made for the present conduct of affairs were under-

* See his letter to Peel, Peel's Memoirs, ii., 19; and generally with reference to the occurrences of this Administration, see ibid., p. 14–93.

stood by all parties to be of a merely temporary character, so that Peel would find himself on his arrival as perfectly unfettered as if no such arrangements had been made at all. Now that the passing heats of party animosity have cooled, it seems strange that an arrangement so manifestly intended to last but a few days as that by which the Duke united the office of Secretary of State with that of First Lord of the Treasury till Peel's return should have excited a single angry comment. But the fury of the partisans of the late Ministry, and even of one or two of the ministers themselves, was so greedy of some object on which to vent itself, that even that poor pretext for virulence seemed better than none to them. Lord Melbourne had scarcely reached London when some one sent to the newspapers information of the dissolution of his Administration, coupled with the assertion that "the Queen "had done it all," and that the Duke had been sent for by his Majesty. In the next Parliament it was openly charged upon the late Cabinet that the communication could only have proceeded from one of their body; nor was the charge denied; nor did common rumour, whether well or ill-founded was never positively known, find any difficulty in fixing on the late Chancellor as the author of it. The statement however that Queen Adelaide had had any share in producing the change was soon known to be wholly groundless; and deprived of her as an aim for their calumnies, the Whig writers and speakers fastened on Wellington with an unanimous virulence almost incredible. At first their wrath was excited by his presuming to undertake the task of forming a Government at all. The leading Whig journal* spoke of the greatest man his country had ever produced as having proved himself either "fool or knave:" knave, if after his opposition to

* The 'Morning Chronicle.' See especially its numbers, Nov. 15, 17, 19.

reform he now proposed to carry out the principles of the Bill lately enacted, fool, if he thought to conduct the Government on any other. Presently, having wrought itself up to greater frenzy by its own vehemence, it refused him even the benefit of the alternative, and reproaching him for the relief of the Roman Catholics, declared that he rested his whole claim to public confidence on having then proved himself both knave and hypocrite; he should not long be permitted to gratify his ambition and to insult the country.

From these general reproaches it was no wonder that it was some sort of relief to them to find an unusual action of the Duke's on which to fasten; and accordingly as soon as he had accepted his two offices, the whole of the disappointed party fixed upon that portion of his conduct as a proper subject for condemnation. One or two of more cheerful temper found in it only matter for a harmless joke; exaggerating it into a seizure of all the offices of the Government, and then calling him Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, according to Mrs. Malaprop's version of that subterranean minister's history: others pointed out how little need there would be of Cabinet Councils, when all the councillors could be covered by one hat: others, with H. B. the caricaturist to whom we have before alluded at their head, found an excuse for the variety of his duties in the multiplicity of his titles; and issued a list of the new Cabinet, assigning the seals of the Home Office to the Duque de Vittoria, those of the Foreign Office to the Prince of Waterloo, the Presidency of the Council to the Marquis of Torres Vedras, and continuing the list till every office in the Government was appropriated to this

"One shape by many titles known." *

* πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία.—ÆSCH. *Prom.* v.

But his adversaries in general were not content with such good-humoured and gentle antagonism. Those who were disposed to be argumentative pointed to the fact of his having transacted business at the Home Office, and having gone from thence to the Horse Guards (where, if it was true that he had gone thither, he could have transacted none at all, since he was not Commander-in-Chief), and desired the people to infer from such a passage what they had to expect. Those who were disposed to be abusive declaimed against his ambition, and his avowed enmity to the people, declaring that he had seized on all the powers of the State to conduct the struggle of the aristocracy against the people; in which assertion they were backed up by a late Cabinet minister, Lord Durham, who was not ashamed to charge him with desiring to "carry on an unconstitutional war against his "countrymen." Those who piqued themselves on their historical knowledge, drawing their precedents from Julius Cæsar and Napoleon, proved that all military chiefs must of necessity be determined despots and enemies of the people. While those of still sterner mood, such as Mr. Thomas Duncombe, the member for Finsbury, backed by Sir John Campbell,* the late Attorney-General, affirmed that he deserved impeachment for the illegality of his conduct, and undertook to bring that danger upon him at the next meeting of Parliament.

Unmoved by abuse, by ridicule, by argument, and by menace, Wellington calmly conducted the whole business of the Government for three weeks, till on the 9th of December Peel arrived from Italy, and after a satisfactory interview with his Sovereign, took upon himself the post of the head of the Government, which the Duke cheerfully resigned to him, and at once proceeded to form an

* Miss Martineau's 'History of Thirty Years since the Peace,' ii., 204.

Administration. In the Duke's* opinion his task was rendered easier by the general approval shown by the country of the dismissal of the late Ministry. Before Peel arrived he had written to him at intervals with the news that all the attempts made by the Whig partisans to excite the populace on the subject had wholly failed; that the country was never more tranquil, and that the funds were rising. He could also report that in his discussions with the most influential nobles of the Tory party he had found them disposed to assent to considerable reforms such as he anticipated that Peel would desire to effect; having been in this matter probably more successful than Peel himself would have been, whose manners were too little conciliatory for the management of a party. He likewise forwarded him a list of all the different desires that had been expressed by those who conceived themselves entitled to entertain them for appointments of the various kinds now at his disposal, and it is characteristic of his perfect exclusion of self throughout the whole of these transactions that while doing so he declared his intention "not to influence Peel's judgment "by any opinion of his, his object being to assist Peel by "every means in his power." Still it could not be denied that the task before Peel was one of great difficulty, and it was some disadvantage to him in encountering it that he did not share the sanguineness with which the Duke trusted to overcome it, a feeling which often contributes in no small degree to the success which it anticipates; not probably that his want of confidence had in this instance any effect on the issue. Peel's opinion was that the dismissal of the late Ministry was premature, and that it would have been better to have waited till it fell to pieces either by internal dissensions, or through disagreement

* See the Duke's Letters of Nov. 22–30, in Peel's Memoirs, ii., 28.

with some of the various parties among its supporters. And the event proved that he judged correctly. Had he been in England at the time his advice to the King would in all likelihood have prevented the final dismissal of Lord Melbourne; but after the late ministers had given up their seals, and the Duke had been formally installed, he conceived that he could no longer refuse to place his own services at the King's disposal, and he proceeded without delay in the formation of his Cabinet. The newspaper partisans of the late Ministry in speculating during his absence on the course which he would adopt, classing the Duke himself and Lord Lyndhurst as moderate Tories, had discussed the probability of his preferring to seek for a portion of his colleagues among the moderate Whigs, such as Lord Stanley* and those who with him had seceded from Lord Grey's Government: and so far they were correct in their expectations; for, after settling with the Duke that he should himself take the Treasury and the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lyndhurst the Great Seal, and Wellington the seals of the Foreign Office (where, after the events of the last four years, a statesman of his weight and influence with the chief Continental powers was urgently required), he proceeded to offer seats in his Cabinet to Lord Stanley and Sir James Graham, urging upon them the consideration that the principal matters on which they had differed from himself were now irrevocably settled, and that he did not anticipate "any dis-"agreement with them as to the principles on which the "Government should hereafter be conducted." Their refusal to accept his invitation was based in a very great degree on the speech delivered by the Duke on the occasion of Lord Grey's retirement from office (a portion of

* Mr. Stanley had in the preceding October become Lord Stanley by the death of his grandfather.

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which Lord Stanley would seem to have misunderstood, since the Duke certainly did not on that occasion "condemn with bitterness the measure of Parliamentary Reform);" and on his now being placed at the Foreign Office, after the objections which he then made "to the whole scope and tendency of the foreign policy pursued under Lord Grey's Government."* Though forced to abandon the hope of this most valuable co-operation, Peel nevertheless succeeded in forming an Administration, admitted by even its opponents to be distinguished by very eminent talent possessed by most of its individual members, who further raised their reputation very considerably by the energy and capacity which they showed in their several offices during their brief tenure of power.† Our present concern however is only with that share in its actions which was borne by the Duke himself. One measure, the dissolution of Parliament, though it cannot be said that it had been

* See Lord Stanley's letter to Peel, Peel's Memoirs, ii., 36. Sir James Graham's grounds of refusal are not mentioned, as they were stated to Peel in a personal interview; but it may fairly be assumed that they were similar to those alleged by Lord Stanley.

† The entire Cabinet was thus composed:—

First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer	Sir R. Peel.
Lord Chancellor	Lord Lyndhurst.
President of the Council	Lord Rosslyn.
Privy Seal	Lord Wharncliffe.
Home Secretary	Mr. Goulburn.
Foreign Secretary	Duke of Wellington.
Colonial Secretary	Lord Aberdeen.
President of the Board of Control	Lord Ellenborough.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Lord de Grey.
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Sir H. Hardinge.
President of the Board of Trade and Master of the Mint	Mr. A. Baring.
Paymaster of the Forces	Sir E. Knatchbull.
Secretary at War	Mr. Herries.

decided on by the Duke before Peel's arrival, was nevertheless so notoriously inevitable, and indeed had been so decidedly spoken of as such by the King in the very first conference with the Duke, that Peel considered he had no option in the matter; not indeed that, if he had had any, his opinion would have differed from that generally entertained, since, though he could not feel sure or even sanguine that the result of such a step would be to give him a majority in the House of Commons, there was no doubt whatever that it would very greatly increase the strength of the Conservative party which had not had fair play at the last general election, from the fact of the country not having then recovered from the excitement attendant on the passing of the Reform Bill. Accordingly Parliament was dissolved, and did not meet till the 19th of February; when it was at once ascertained that though the parties in the Lower House were now far more evenly balanced than they had been for the last four years, the kingdom was not yet prepared to support a Conservative Administration. As far indeed as English constituencies alone were concerned Peel had already obtained an actual majority; but it was not sufficient to counterbalance the votes of the Irish members who were almost unanimously opposed to him, in obedience to the Roman Catholic priests and O'Connell, who exerted the whole of their influence to overturn a Ministry to the chiefs of which they owed their political power and position.

In the House of Commons the ministers were twice defeated in the course of the first week after its meeting: once, on the choice of a Speaker, by ten votes; once, on an amendment moved to the Address, by seven. In the House of Lords the result was different, the Opposition not venturing to proceed to a division; and the chief

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interest of the debate, as far at least as the present work is concerned, lay in the vehement attacks made by Lord Melbourne and his late Chancellor, Lord Brougham, on Wellington's conduct in undertaking the whole responsibility of the Government during the three weeks which elapsed between their dismissal and the formation of the existing Government. The Duke's first letter to Peel had asserted that "it had been quite clear that the late "ministers could not go on, and that they were all, par-"ticularly Lord Melbourne, delighted to be relieved." In less than a week afterwards he had reported that on giving up the seals "they were all sulky enough." * And they now seemed resolved in both Houses to show that his second estimate of their disposition was the more correct one, and that calm reflection instead of softening their feelings of annoyance had only embittered them. As far as reasoning went, however, the advocates of the Ministry in both Houses were triumphant. In the House of Commons Lord Morpeth, who had been put forward by the Opposition to move the amendment to the Address, though generally a man of the most conciliatory and amiable temper, attacked the Duke for not having shown to the previous Ministry the usual courtesy of allowing them to hold their situations till the appointment of their successors; and still more severely, for what he called "the most unusual and unseemly huddling "of incompatible offices in his single person." He imagined the possibility that at one and the same time war might have arisen abroad, insurrection might have broken out in the colonies, outrages greater than usual might have distracted Ireland, and then (without stopping to consider how far such a state of universal confusion would have been to the credit of his friends the late

* See his letters of Nov. 15 and Nov. 20 in Peel's Memoirs.

ministers) he asked himself and the House, "Could any "single shoulders have sufficed to bear so immense a "responsibility?" and, warming with his theme, gave a theoretical kind of answer to his own question by declaring that there was "hardly an old Whig of the "Rockingham school whose hair did not stand on end at "this unconstitutional concentration of responsibility of "power."

He was triumphantly answered, and the Duke was most successfully justified by Mr. Pemberton, who, with reference to his first topic of reproach, retorting a part of Lord Morpeth's charges upon the late Ministry, argued irresistibly that the instant announcement of the dissolution of the late Government in the papers, which by no possibility could have been furnished by any one but a Cabinet minister, accompanied as it was by a statement confessedly false of the share which the Queen had had in that dissolution, a statement which was manifestly designed to inflame the country and to embarrass the King, rendered it indispensable at once to get rid of a Cabinet any single member of which could be guilty of an action so mischievous and malignant; not to mention that it was impossible to conceive that any single minister however rash and unable to control himself would have ventured on such a step, had he not felt sure that it would meet with the approbation of his colleagues. With regard to the Duke's occupation of the seals of the Home Office at the same time with that of the chief post at the Treasury, his argument was equally convincing to all dispassionate minds. Had Wellington been ambitious of official rank, had he been studious of mere momentary convenience, he might have taken the chief office in the Ministry himself, and filled up the other posts at his leisure, reserving for Peel on his return the choice of

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such as were most likely to be agreeable to him; but he judged that, as it would be in the House of Commons that the principal conflict of parties would take place, it was desirable that the Prime Minister should be a member of that body. And for that reason, and with that object alone, he did adopt what the speaker agreed with Lord Morpeth was an unprecedented course. "He did take upon himself all the offices of the State; "he did take upon himself all the risk, and all the "labour, and all the odium, and all the responsibility, "everything but the patronage and emoluments of office. "He did accept the supreme power in the State, only to "hold it as a sacred deposit till he could place it in the "hands to which it was now entrusted. He laid it down "at the earliest moment, and, as was allowed, without a "single complaint from a single quarter of any interest "public or private having suffered neglect or detriment "while he held it. He laid it down without having in a "single instance employed it to the advantage of himself "or of any one depending on him. This was the despot, "the usurper, the Mayor of the Palace, whom newspaper "editors and mob orators reviled and insulted day after "day, and week after week, as if they had forgotten to "whom under Heaven it was owing that they had a free "country to agitate, or a free country to misuse."

In the House of Lords, strange to say, the attack upon the Duke was fiercer still, Lord Melbourne leading the van with a degree of acrimony very unusual in him; and Lord Brougham denouncing every part of his conduct with a bitterness so vehement and so personal as to deprive his declamation of its usual force and weight. Their arguments were not entirely identical. Lord Melbourne denounced him for accepting a combination of offices, which he affirmed to be incompatible with

each other, declaring also that if he had taken them "with any intention to exercise their powers, it was not "too much to say that such an intention would have "amounted to a treasonable misdemeanour." Lord Brougham, being a lawyer, could hardly venture to back up that assertion, but he denounced him in his turn for having accepted any office at all, since if he had refused the late Ministry could not have been dismissed against their will, as they had been dismissed. They both blamed the Government for dissolving Parliament with a vehemence that sufficiently proved their conviction that that measure had greatly strengthened the ministers, and affirmed that the whole responsibility of the change of Administration, and of all the measures consequent upon that change, rested on Wellington's shoulders, as the unavoidable result of his precipitate eagerness to take office. It was equally in character with the ordinary style of oratory of the late Chancellor to take occasion, as he did, to extol himself and his colleagues; though when he proceeded to taunt Wellington with his conversion on the question of relief to the Roman Catholics, and to affirm that, monstrous as that had been "it would be nothing to "his conversion now to an inclination to give the Reform "Bill a fair trial, and to carry into effect the principles "on which that measure was founded," his usual acuteness of logic deserted him in a manner that must seem very strange to those who do not recollect that the noble speaker at all times piqued himself at least as much on his rhetoric as on his candour: since the most prejudiced of his hearers or readers could not have failed to see the difference between opposing the enactment of a measure before it has been carried, and disobeying its provisions or infringing its spirit after it has become the law of the land. Wellington's opposition to the Reform Bill had

indeed been far stronger than that which before 1829 he had offered to the relief of the Roman Catholics, since, however Lord Brougham might on this occasion think fit to sneer at his change of opinion on that subject, no one was better aware that the Duke had never rested his resistance to that measure on principle, but had merely argued that the time was not come for it, and that it was not one which could have a fair chance of success, unless, instead of being forced on the Ministry of the day by the Opposition, it were spontaneously brought forward by the Government itself. In short, his opposition to it had been always based on the circumstances of the moment; nor had he ever denied that at some later period it might become expedient or even indispensable. It was true that his objections to the Reform Bill had been of a far more unchangeable character, since he wholly denied the fundamental principles on which its framers and advocates based their support of it; still, just as he had avowed his expectation when the Roman Catholic Relief Bill was carried by his Administration, that henceforth its opponents would acquiesce in it, so did he look upon himself as now bound as a loyal subject of the King and a dutiful citizen of his country to do all in his power to give the Reform Bill a fair chance of success, though attainable only by the falsification of his own predictions.*

Wellington was still a far less practised speaker than the least eloquent of his assailants; but the path of duty as it had presented itself to his view had been so plain that he had no difficulty in defending himself with the

* See his letter to Sir J. Malcolm, November, 1832, Malcolm's Life, ii., 588, where he speaks approvingly of the "great efforts making by his party "to give the Reform Bill a chance of not working injuriously to the country," an effort which all "are bound to make."

most convincing effect. He denied that he was responsible for the dissolution of the late Government, because, even had he declined to take office, it could not have gone on after the removal of Lord Althorp from the Lower House, fortifying his argument on this point by the language used by Lord Grey when he retired in the summer in consequence of Lord Althorp's resignation at that time, which, as has been already mentioned, was afterwards so strangely retracted. Lord Grey's own statement then had been that the loss of that noble lord "had made it impossible for him any longer to continue "to carry on the Government or to serve the Crown "with honour or advantage." And could it be easier for Lord Melbourne to do so now when the Administration was weakened by the loss of Lord Althorp and of Lord Grey too? How, he asked, could the King, with such a statement so recently made by such a man as Lord Grey fresh in his recollection, approve of arrangements being made to continue for a little while longer a brief authority to an Administration which he had such good reason for feeling sure could not possibly last long? His own acceptance of the two offices of Secretary of State and First Lord of the Treasury he not only justified by the same arguments as those which were used by Mr. Pemberton, of the absolute necessity that the Government should be taken possession of by some one, and that, since his Majesty had adopted his advice of placing Peel at its head, "whoever might exercise the authority "of the Government till that minister could return to "the country, should take no step that might embarrass "or compromise him;" but also by precedents not drawn from any remote reign, when the principle of ministerial responsibility was less clearly settled, but from so recent an era as that of George IV., when in 1827 Canning had

held the office of First Lord of the Treasury for nearly three weeks before he resigned the seals of the Foreign Office, and did actually exercise the functions of both those high situations without any one professing to see anything unconstitutional in his conduct. Indeed he denied, and with abundant reason, that the post of Secretary of State was more incompatible with that of First Lord of the Treasury than was the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, which had often been held with it, and was actually held with it at that moment without exciting any complaint. The dissolution of the late Parliament he not only defended irresistibly on the ground, first, of the excited state of the country at the time of its election; and secondly, by the admission made by the late Ministry that even "they would be unable to go on with that Parliament;" but he also showed by arguments used by Lord Melbourne himself that he was now premature in his objections to such a step, since he pronounced it one which required success to justify it, and on the first day of the session it was impossible to tell whether it had been successful or not. He himself avowed a confident expectation that it would be found to have succeeded, and that the result of it would prove that "a vast "number of persons had been returned who were deter- "mined to give their support to the existing Admini- "stration, if they should deem their measures entitled "to support, and who were really desirous of finding "them to be so."

This hope, as we shall see, was partly fulfilled and partly frustrated. Frustrated, inasmuch as the ministers still found themselves in the House of Commons opposed by a majority which though small was, while in opposition, united; and was resolved to deny them a hearing at

all, and to refuse them any chance of winning the good opinion of the nation by laying their proposed measures fairly before it: fulfilled in that they found themselves supported by a minority so formidable in point of numbers, and so firmly united, not by motives of temporary interest, but by solid political principles, as to be an effectual check on the rashness of their opponents when they succeeded to office and were again divided by the discord consequent on their success. His vindication of himself had been complete; not indeed when he argued that he was not responsible for the dismissal of the late Ministry, because, though it was quite true that that measure had been adopted by the King (and indeed apparently acquiesced in by Lord Melbourne till he was overborne by the discontent of some of his colleagues) without his having in the least contributed to or having been privy to it, no constitutional principle is more fully established than that which lays it down that, since the Sovereign himself is irresponsible, and since there must be some one responsible for every transaction, that responsibility must belong to his ministers; and again, that, as the late Administration could not be represented as responsible for their own dismissal, that Government which had succeeded them must be so. But with respect to his assumption of the two offices, nothing was ever more clearly proved than that there was no inherent incompatibility in them which could have rendered it improper; that it was justified by precedent; and that the use made of the power so obtained, or rather the abstinence from using it at all, was so admirable that, even had it been both unprecedented and unwarranted, the object for which it was adopted and the conduct by which it was carried out might well have averted the censure of any judges less partial than those who, exasperated at the loss of office, were thinking of

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nothing but the means by which they might most speedily recover it.

So vehement, frequent, and successful were the attacks made upon the Government in the House of Commons, that it did not retain office above seven weeks after the meeting of Parliament; and during that time the Duke applied himself vigorously to the affairs of his own office, in which he charmed the foreign ministers resident at our Court, not only by his punctuality and methodical precision, to which they had of late been unaccustomed, but by the higher qualities of prompt decision in the most difficult emergencies, and by a straightforward candour* which more than one of our diplomatists since the time of Sir Henry Wotton had pronounced to be the best diplomacy, but which it requires almost as much genius as honesty to practise without deviation. During this period no debate arose in the House of Lords of such a nature as to call for any exertion on his part with the exception of an incidental discussion which took place on the subject of the contemplated appointment of Lord Londonderry to the Embassy of St. Petersburg. The meddling policy of the late Ministers had excited a feeling of uneasiness and discontent in most of the Continental Courts, and nowhere more than in that of Russia, which looked upon them as particularly hostile to itself, and disposed to sacrifice its interests and to abandon all intimate connection with it in favour of France; while the Government of Louis Philippe, in the opinion of the Russian Emperor and his ablest advisers, being itself the child of revolution, was desirous of disseminating revolutionary principles over the whole Continent. To remove this feeling of suspicion, Wellington proposed to send Lord Londonderry as ambassador to Russia, a nobleman who, as our

* See Sebastiani's language to Raikes, recorded in the latter's Diary, ii. 69.

minister at the Court of Vienna for several years, had given proof of considerable diplomatic capacity; he was also fully in his own confidence, being the brother of that illustrious predecessor of his in his present office, whose counsels he had often so intimately shared, and to whose memory he was so sincerely attached; and he had also good reason for expecting him to be peculiarly acceptable to the Emperor Nicholas. That potentate had already shown his pleasure at the change in our Government by sending hither as his minister Count Pozzo di Borgo, who had long been known to and esteemed by Wellington; and the Duke thought it well to strengthen his renewed inclinations in our favour by sending him in return an ambassador whom he would cordially welcome.

But the very qualities which recommended Lord Londonderry to the Duke had a very contrary effect on the judgment of the Opposition, and the leaders of that party attacked his appointment in both Houses of Parliament with a vehemence which, in spite of their disclaimers of any such motive, seemed undoubtedly to be prompted by something of personal animosity. In the Lower House, as if on purpose to show the truth of the remark of George III., that if one wished an Irishman to be injured another Irishman was always to be found glad to do it, the attack was led by Mr. Shiel: in the House of Lords the Marquess of Lansdowne was the leader of the Opposition; he, from his long-standing experience as a minister, might have been expected to have been more cautious in interfering with the royal prerogative; and in fact he did not notice the subject till after Lord Londonderry had, of his own accord, resigned the appointment on finding it made the pretext for a demonstration against the ministers. Yet when Lord Londonderry announced his resignation in the House of Lords, Lord Lansdowne, disdaining to be

disarmed by the moderation of his enemy, seized the opportunity of condemning the very notion of such an appointment; justifying his bitterness on the subject by a reference to the unfavourable opinion expressed at different times by Lord Londonderry on the foreign policy of the late Government, and on the state of disquietude into which they had plunged all Europe. He reproached him for his views with respect to the civil wars raging in Spain and Portugal; for his presumption in calling in question the benefits of the close alliance with the Government of Louis Philippe, of which Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne were so fond and so proud; and above all, and more naturally, since these questions had but a remote bearing on the qualifications requisite for an ambassador from Great Britain to Russia, on the language which he had held concerning the Poles, whom he was reported to have called "rebellious subjects" of the Emperor.

Wellington, who claimed for himself the whole responsibility of the appointment, was not slow to justify both himself and his friend. He vindicated both, not only by his own personal knowledge of his friend's qualifications, but by the diplomatic skill which Lord Londonderry had proved himself to possess in the various employments in that branch of the public service which he from time to time had filled, especially at Vienna; where he had discharged his duties in a manner that had earned the warmest approbation of Canning, who held the seals of the Foreign Office when he resigned that embassy. He maintained moreover that the circumstances of Lord Londonderry holding high rank in the Russian army, and being personally very acceptable to the Emperor, were great additional recommendations of him for such a post; and he not obscurely intimated that, had not Lord

Londonderry's delicacy led him to resign his appointment on finding it assailed in the House of Commons, he should have persevered in it, so highly did he disapprove, and so dangerous did he consider any interference on the part of Parliament with the royal prerogative, of which there was no branch more important than the selection of ambassadors.

It is probable that no one now would deny that the attack on Lord Londonderry, and through him on the Ministry, was wholly unjustifiable. Even if he had applied the terms "rebellious subjects" to the Poles, which was very doubtful, it is not easy to see how the truthfulness of his description of them could have been denied; while nevertheless his recollection of his brother's successful efforts in their favour in 1815 was likely to induce him so far to emulate it as to try and obtain merciful terms for them from the Emperor; at the same time he was likely to be a far more efficient check on that part of the Russian policy which was most adverse to our interests than any one whom the Whigs would have approved. There was nothing in which we were more concerned than in preventing Russia from obtaining a predominant interest in Turkey; but as far back as 1830, Lord John Russell had questioned the wisdom of our endeavouring to support the Sultan. And Lord Holland, going further, had even expressed his regret that the Russians had not taken Constantinople; while Wellington, then Prime Minister, had avowed his fixed opinion that the protection of Turkey by us was a most important duty. And again in 1832, when the Sultan applied to us for aid against his rebellious Viceroy Mehemet Ali, the Whig Ministry had refused it, though their refusal was caused not perhaps so much by their disinclination to afford him the support which he solicited, as

by the extent to which, in deference to the clamour of certain radical economists, they had weakly reduced our military and naval establishments. This refusal was also known to be disapproved of by the Duke, and his views on the whole Turkish question were sure to be carried out by one so habituated to look up to him with deference as Lord Londonderry; while the known firmness of character of both Secretary of State and ambassador was a sufficient pledge that they would never submit to insults such as the Russian Emperor had put on Lord Grey's Government by a refusal to receive Sir Stratford Canning as our ambassador; and upon that of Lord Melbourne, by withholding the customary salute from Lord Durham when he arrived at Odessa in that capacity; and by refusing to permit any one to reside as British Consul at Cracow. Time gradually brought the Parliament to acknowledge more and more fully the wisdom of the policy avowed by the Duke and disparaged by the Whigs of upholding Turkey; and the treaty concluded by Lord Palmerston with that power in 1838, and the vigorous assistance afforded to it by us in 1841 may be taken as a recantation of the language held by the Whigs before and during the Administration of Lord Grey, and as a silent recognition of the superior wisdom of the Duke and those who were guided by his sagacious and comprehensive judgment.

But Wellington's most active achievement during this Administration was one in which no difference of opinion could arise, and from which no one could be found hardy enough to detract. He also interfered in the affairs of Spain, but in a spirit very different from that which had of late years dictated our intervention in the affairs of that and other countries. The civil war between the adherents of Queen Christina and Don Carlos was still raging, and was being conducted by the generals on both

sides with a degree of atrocious cruelty which it was not only a disgrace to themselves to practise, but almost equally shameful to Christendom to suffer. The burning of defenceless villages which, often unwillingly and under compulsion, had given food or shelter to the troops of the opposite faction, the decimation of their peaceful inhabitants, and the slaughter of prisoners by hundreds in cold blood were crimes daily perpetrated, avowed, and justified alike by the Queen's generals, Mina and Valdez, and by Zumalacarregui, who by his skill and gallantry upheld during his life the cause of her rival; and who, like some of the French commanders in the revolutionary war, gave the lie to the common and pleasing belief that cruelty and courage are incompatible. Yet no one had endeavoured to put a stop to these atrocious proceedings till the Duke now sent Lord Eliot to the scene of the war, with instructions to endeavour to bring the hostile leaders to a mutual agreement to treat their prisoners according to the laws of civilized war; and to forbear inflicting on their country a devastation which must be equally injurious to whichever of the pretenders to the Crown should eventually obtain the superiority in the strife.

No one in Spain could wholly disregard a remonstrance proceeding from the hero who within the recollection of the leaders to whom it was addressed had himself saved by his arms the country which he now sought to save by the acts of peace. Accordingly, the language which Lord Eliot was directed to hold produced its instant effect. On the very day of his arrival in Zumalacarregui's camp, it preserved the lives of a number of prisoners whose execution had already been ordered; and by his influence an agreement, known as the Eliot Convention, was concluded between the two parties. By it thousands of valuable and innocent lives were saved, and being honourably

observed by both sides, it continued its beneficial operation till our departure from a neutral policy and the arrival of Colonel Evans and his legion in the north again exasperated their mutual feeling of animosity, and revived the hideous cruelty which had for a time been laid aside under circumstances which in some degree reflected dishonour on us as the cause of its revival.*

But even before Lord Eliot reached the Spanish coast, the Administration which had sent him had ceased to exist. The introduction of many sound measures of domestic improvement had no effect in abating the animosity of an unscrupulous Opposition; who, though they did not venture to propose a vote of a want of confidence in the Ministry, defeated them on many motions of less consequence, and at last summoned courage to attack the Government Bill for the settlement of the Tithe question in Ireland by the sidewind of an abstract resolution, affirming that no measure on the subject could be satisfactory that did not proceed upon the principle of appropriating the surplus revenues of the Established Church in Ireland to such other purposes as might appear expedient. Such a resolution not only begged the question of the existence of a revenue belonging to the Church greater than was sufficient for ecclesiastical purposes, but also re-asserted the principle that funds originally set apart for purposes of religion might lawfully be diverted to secular uses; a doctrine which had caused the first great schism in Lord Grey's Cabinet. It was however carried by a considerable majority in the House of Commons on the 7th of April, and the next day the Ministry resigned their offices; having, in spite of their unusually brief tenure of authority, and their inability to carry a single measure, yet by the liberality of the views which they

* See 'Annual Register,' 1835, 440.

had developed, and by the manifest honesty of their intention, opened the eyes of the country in general to their superior capacity for the conduct of affairs; and having by so doing greatly strengthened themselves for the struggle which awaited them as members of Opposition; and, with regard to our connection with foreign powers, having done much to re-establish their confidence in our system, and in the Peninsula having successfully asserted our ancient character as the best champions of independence and humanity.

CHAPTER LIII.

Lord Melbourne resumes office—Defeat of the Irish Tithe Bill in the House of Lords — Municipal Corporation Bill in England and in Ireland — Subservience of the Ministers to O'Connell—Suspension of the Foreign Enlistment Act—Lord Normanby's conduct in Ireland—The Oxford and Cambridge Statutes Bill.

THOUGH it was easy to overturn the Conservative Administration, it was a harder task to construct a Whig Government. The King in the first instance applied to Lord Grey; but that nobleman refused to return to public life; so that William IV. had no resource but to apply again to Lord Melbourne; making, as was generally believed, the single stipulation that Lord Brougham should not again be entrusted with the custody of the Great Seal. The new arrangements occupied a very unusual length of time, owing, according to Lord Melbourne's own account when announcing the formation of his Ministry to the Peers, to his having had to contend with "difficulties peculiarly great and arduous, "some of which had even been of a severe and mortifying nature." What they had been did not appear, as the principal members of his new Administration were the same as those who had been his colleagues in his previous Administration, with a slight variation in the allotment of the different offices; and with the exception of Lord

Brougham, who had no post assigned to him; the Great Seal being put in commission, partly in order to lessen the exasperation which it was foreseen that he would feel at being thus excluded, and partly, as was alleged, from the dearth of lawyers of sufficient capacity and reputation among the partisans of the new Ministry to justify their appointment to so responsible a situation; though afterwards, when in the next year Lord Cottenham was made Chancellor, and Lord Langdale was also introduced into the House of Lords as Master of the Rolls, the ability displayed by them proved that the latter pretext for so unusual a proceeding as leaving the Court of Chancery without a presiding judge and the House of Lords without a Speaker was imaginary and mistaken.

The Duke resumed his former character of leader of the Opposition; but the events of the last two months had produced some material change in his position as such, both for weakness and for strength. For weakness, since, as it was plain that no Conservative Government could stand with the existing House of Commons, it was necessary to forbear such a resistance to the measures that might be proposed by the Ministry as might either provoke them to threats of resignation, or might give them any pretext for coercing the King into large creations of Peers to neutralize the majority against them in the Upper House: for strength, inasmuch as the near approach to equality in the numbers of the two parties in the House of Commons gave the Opposition in the House of Lords a support of which for the last three years they had been wholly deprived; affording them and their Sovereign also, who was well known to view all further innovations with apprehension, a comforting assurance that in resisting and checking measures of sweeping and revolutionary change, whether in regard to the civil or

religious establishments of the country, they would be regarded with favour both by the representatives of the people and by the nation at large.

The new Ministry was equally aware that this state of parties had rendered it needful for them to be more cautious than before, and to endeavour so to frame their measures as to conciliate rather than to provoke an Opposition which they could with difficulty defeat in one House of Parliament, and by which they were completely overborne in the other. They had some reason to fear lest even their majority in the Commons might soon slip away; for of the new elections which were occasioned by their acceptance of office, no less than three, in Inverness-shire in Scotland, and in the important counties of Stafford and Devon in England, were decided against them: in the latter the Secretary of State, Lord John Russell, being beaten by a very large majority by a country gentleman of moderate fortune, who had never before taken a prominent part in politics. Accordingly, when Parliament reassembled, which it did not do till after an unusually long adjournment of five weeks, the language of the ministers in both Houses was very moderate, and the measures which they announced their intention to introduce were limited to two: one for the settlement of the Irish Tithe question, the other for the Reform of the Municipal Corporations in England.

With regard to the former, Lord Melbourne declared, as indeed was unavoidable, that he considered himself pledged to act on the late resolution of the House of Commons, asserting the indispensableness of "the appro- "priation clause" as it was commonly called, which had led to the resignation of Sir R. Peel. And if this avowal was pleasing to his parliamentary supporters, he at the

same time gave more general satisfaction to the country at large by a declaration of his perfect independence of Mr. O'Connell and the Irish Roman Catholic party; though unfortunately for his fame he had not the steadiness of character requisite to enable him long to retain that independence. It will be seen hereafter that with similar weakness he subsequently abandoned the appropriation clause, though the alleged resolution of himself and his colleagues unalterably to insist on it had been the means by which they had achieved the recovery of their offices. The present occasion however came too soon after the success of Lord John Russell's resolution for them to be guilty of such baseness; and when the clause was rejected by the Peers they abandoned their Bill altogether. The Bill for the regulation of the tithes in Ireland, as introduced by Lord Morpeth into the House of Commons, could certainly not be called a moderate measure, since the plan by which a surplus, the existence of which the ministers were pledged to prove, was to be procured, involved the suppression of upwards of 800 parishes in which the Protestant population was most scanty. Peel in the House of Commons, in one of the most masterly speeches he ever delivered, demonstrated the enormous exaggerations and mistakes on which the Bill rested, and utterly demolished its whole foundation, though, as this was a subject on which the ministerial majority was most especially united, he could not carry an amendment which he proposed, the object of which was to divide the proposed measure into two Bills, in order that those details which were intended to carry into effect the appropriation of the surplus, the existence of which he denied, and indeed had disproved, might be separated from those relating to the commutation of the tithe and its more easy collection, to which,

on the part of the whole Conservative party, he was prepared to assent.

As has been intimated above, he was defeated by a majority rather larger than that which in the spring had affirmed Lord John Russell's resolution. He was supported however by above 280 members; and a minority so respectable gave great encouragement to their friends in the House of Lords. There the Duke permitted the Bill to pass to its second reading without opposition, not thinking it desirable to oppose altogether a measure professing to have for its main object the facilitation of the collection of tithe by the Protestant clergy of Ireland, who under the existing system had been reduced by the violence of their enemies and the impotence of the law to a condition little better than that of starvation; but he encouraged his followers to oppose its objectionable details with vigour; and accordingly Lord Haddington, who, as having been Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under the last Ministry, appeared to have a peculiarly appropriate connection with the question, moved and carried the omission of those clauses to which Peel had in vain objected. Wellington supported his friend in a speech very brief but full of weighty matter. He had already, in one or two incidental discussions which arose on the presentation of petitions, avowed his earnest desire to put down the dissensions which raged so furiously throughout almost every part of Ireland; had warned the Government and the House that it was "a mistake to suppose "that they could be put down by allowing one party to "oppress the other," and had insisted that it was the plain duty of Lord Melbourne and the authorities in that country "to give the protection of his Majesty's "Government to the Protestant clergy and people in "Ireland;" and that the display on their parts of a

determination to do so would put an end to the evils which they all professed to deplore: and he challenged comparison between the Bill of the present Government and that which had been introduced by the Cabinet of which he had been a member, and which had been defeated by the resolution carried by Lord John Russell; affirming that, "had it passed into a law it would have "produced satisfaction and tranquillity." And in the same spirit now, while professing his desire to give Lord Melbourne "every support in carrying on the King's "business," and reminding the House that "he had "done everything in his power to advance and promote "the business of Government," he still declared that superior even to this desire was the consideration "of "performing his duty to his Sovereign and to his coun- "try," and that that duty compelled him to oppose the present measures of the Government. He, as Peel had done, referred to the numerous exaggerations in the statements of the revenues of the Irish Church, by which the ministers had sought to justify their proposal for the appropriation of its superfluities to secular objects; and he entreated the House to disregard them, and to disregard at the same time the menaces of the Prime Minister that he would abandon the Bill altogether if the Peers should decide to omit the appropriation clause, or, as had been proposed in the House of Commons, to separate that part of the Bill which referred to the amount of the ecclesiastical revenues from the part which bore upon the commutation and the collection of the tithe. By a majority of 138 to 41 the House adopted the advice of their sagacious leader, and for the moment Lord Melbourne threw up the Bill. It is impossible here to avoid remarking once more how greatly the abandonment in 1829 of the intention to endow the Roman Catholic priesthood complicated all

subsequent legislation for Ireland. Had Wellington then followed his first impulse, and inserted a clause to that effect in the Emancipation Bill, there would have been no question now of the appropriation of the surplus revenues, as they were termed, of the Protestant Church: one great pretext for agitation in Ireland would have been lost to her agitators, and in the same manner the factious opposition of Lord John Russell and his Whig followers to Peel's Ministry must have sought some other handle for ejecting it, in which they might probably have found it less easy to secure the co-operation of their Irish allies.

Though however Lord Melbourne thought that till the means by which he had recovered office were forgotten, his honour forbade him to consent to such an emasculation of his Tithe Bill, he did not conceive it to be equally concerned in carrying through the Bill for Municipal Reform without alterations, and he submitted to have several most important amendments to that measure carried against him. The Bill was originally founded on a report presented to Parliament by a commission appointed by Lord Grey's Government to inquire into the state of the different corporations in the kingdom; but both the commission and the report were open to grave objections. The commission, as having been selected almost wholly from eager political partisans of extreme Whig opinions; the report, as having been framed in accordance with those opinions, after an inquiry which was conducted in the most irregular and unbusiness-like manner, in spite of the formal protest of the only two members of the commission who were not pledged to the views of the Government: many of the witnesses having shaped their testimony according to what they saw that the commissioners wished to believe rather

than with any regard to truth; and the commissioners, with equally little scruple, having admitted evidence of all kinds, much of which, as being avowedly hearsay, the witnesses could not know to be true, and much of which, as was subsequently proved, they knew to be false; and having rejected witnesses of unimpeachable truth, and evidence capable of the most abundant confirmation. The Duke looked upon this measure as of especial importance, on account of the vast amount of property with which it dealt, (though the ministers had sought to mitigate opposition by forbearing to include in their Bill the richest and most corrupt, and, if regard be had to the importance of the city which it ruled, the most unworthy of all, the Corporation of London); and accordingly he had directed considerable attention to the framing of the amendments to be proposed, and with great judgment * entrusted the task of bringing them forward to Lord Lyndhurst, as being best qualified by his pre-eminent legal knowledge (pre-eminent ever since extreme old age had rendered the attendance of Lord Eldon at the debates an event of rare occurrence), and by his singularly lucid style of eloquence, for dealing with so dry and complicated a question. But he showed the interest which he took in it by speaking on almost every single amendment; and it was owing to his judicious firmness that the Lords decided on hearing both counsel and evidence against the Bill; a proceeding which enabled many of the corporations wholly to refute the allegations which had been made against them in the report of the commissioners, and to give the House in many instances a juster notion of the amount of property involved in the proposed

* See especially his speech Sept. 4, 1835, in which he declares himself to be "the person who solicited Lord Lyndhurst to undertake the management "of the amendments," and avows himself to be responsible for them.

changes than it could have acquired either from the Bill itself or from any explanation which Lord Melbourne took the trouble to give of its probable effects. To him too, as the vigilant and unwearied leader of his party never absent from a single discussion on the subject, was owing the preservation of the rights of the freemen; and that still more important provision that the town-councils to be created by the Bill as the future governing authorities of their respective towns, instead of having their seats open to the whole body of ratepayers, should be chosen from the most respectable class alone, respectability as usual being tested by a fixed property qualification. And in the same way many other improvements in matters of detail were introduced and were carried in spite of the vehement and often angry opposition of the ministers, till the Bill as eventually passed was deprived of the mischievous features which it originally possessed, and rendered a safe and beneficial measure.

And in conducting the debates on this question Wellington had displayed not only most admirable temper in replying to some of the injurious taunts and undeserved imputations which his repeated discomfitures provoked the minister to level at him; and most skilful tact and readiness in debate, encountering even the more practised ability of Lord Brougham on equal terms; but he had also given abundant proof of the sincerity of his declaration that he was never opposed to the reform of any proved abuse. Had he listened to the earnest entreaties of the high Tory party in the House, he would have assented to the entire rejection of the Bill which was moved by the Duke of Newcastle: but he declined being a party to any such step, openly admitting that he thought some reform in the administration of the corporate towns of the kingdom essential, not only from a general con-

sideration of the duties entrusted to them, and of the manner in which those duties were too often performed; but also on the broader ground that, "as the people of the "kingdom since the original establishment of close cor- "porations had advanced in riches, in knowledge, and in "their whole condition, it was natural that they should "wish to participate in the administration of their own "affairs." This was in fact very nearly the same argument as that by which the promoters of the Reform Bill had recommended that measure; and its adoption by the Duke now was the plainest proof possible that he had really, as he said, accepted the principles of that Bill as the future rule of Government, and that he was prepared in all things to aid in the carrying them out in a liberal adherence to their intention and spirit.

And the same conciliatory and statesmanlike course of acquiescing cordially in measures which, when once carried, could never be recalled, was followed by him in dealing with the measures for the reform of the Irish Corporations which was introduced by the Government in the year following: though the differences between the circumstances of England and Ireland arising from the past history of the latter island, and the state of property and religion existing in it, necessarily entailed some difference in the motive and character of the amendments which he and those who were guided by his advice proposed. He admitted frankly that "the corporations existing in "Ireland on account of the exclusive principle on which "they had uniformly been conducted had given reason- "able cause of dissatisfaction to a large proportion of the "Irish people;" and that on that account he was prepared to consent to an extensive reform of them. Having been originally erected in the reign of James I. with a view to strengthen the Protestant interest in the island,

they had exaggerated the object of their establishment so far as to exclude even the most respectable Roman Catholic from the slightest share in them: and Wellington was prepared to remodel them so far as to prevent a continuance of so unfair and offensive a system; but with equal reason he refused to agree to the clauses of the Government Bill, which would have given the whole power of electing the town councils in future to the most numerous class of ratepayers, who would of course be the lowest class; and which, as he truly said, "were only calculated to erect a new exclusion upon the ruins of the old one; to call into existence another and more intolerable species of domination than that which it was desired to abolish."

But though the Government had acquiesced in his amendments to the English Bill, they were already, in spite of Lord Melbourne's disclaimer, too greatly under the influence of O'Connell and the Irish Roman Catholic party in the House of Commons to dare to yield to his views in this instance without a struggle; and for three consecutive years they threw up the Bill rather than consent to changes which he thus proposed solely with a view to place both Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland on an equality, instead of merely transferring to the one sect the ascendency which had hitherto been enjoyed by the other.

So resolute at this time was Wellington to avoid offering any opposition to the Ministry which he could possibly avoid, that he would not even make any formal resistance to their reduction of the militia, though he looked upon it as a most impolitic measure; and most earnestly sought to impress upon them and upon the Parliament a proper sense of the great value of that force; not only on general principles, as "one by which the Government is enabled at a small expense, and in

" perfect accordance with the Constitution, always to put " the country in that state of preparation in which a " great nation ought ever to be, but in which this nation " cannot be in reference to the other powers of Europe, " without such aid;" but also by a reference to recent events in which (as for instance during the riots of 1829) the militia had been " greatly instrumental in preserving " the tranquillity of the country." And he urged the Prime Minister most earnestly to reconsider the whole question before another Session, " with a view to place " the militia not only in a state of organization, but of " efficient discipline;" volunteering a promise that he himself would gladly " give him any assistance in his " power to render it permanent and efficient for the " country." It will be seen hereafter that to the end of his life the Duke maintained the idea that our force of all kinds for the defence of the country was inadequate to the demands which might possibly be made upon it; and that he was at all times eager to sink all party differences in order to co-operate with any Government to put our defences in a perfectly impregnable state; judging by the light of his own vast military experience that, however improbable disasters may be, in war nothing is impossible; and that the costliness, and inconvenience, and hardship of maintaining a constant vigilance are not to be compared to the disgrace and calamity which may ensue from being caught for a single moment unprepared.

The same spirit which had dictated his language concerning the reform of the Municipal Corporations, led him also in the next year to give his hearty assent to the measures brought in by the Government in accordance with the recommendation of the Ecclesiastical Commission lately appointed for the strengthening of the Church Establishment in England, by the remodelling of many

of the ancient dioceses, the union of one or two, and the comparative equalization of the incomes of the different sees; though he did not carry his indulgence so far as to forbear administering a severe reproof to the Prime Minister when that statesman, not content with defending the acts of his own Administration, endeavoured to carry the war into the enemy's camp, by volunteering an attack on the general principles of the Government which had preceded his own. Lord Wicklow, with a severity the more intolerable because everybody to a great extent acknowledged its truth, charged the ministers with having, in requital to Mr. O'Connell for the support which they received from him and from his party, "to which "they owed their places and their ability to stand one "moment before the people of England," endeavoured to place the whole Government and power of Ireland at his disposal by the Bill for the Registration of Votes in Ireland which they brought forward in 1835; and into which they had introduced a clause wholly unconnected with the ostensible objects of the Bill, greatly diminishing the respectability of the constituencies established by the Reform Bill, by repealing the provisions which required the claimant of a vote to swear that he actually had a beneficial interest to the value of ten pounds a year in the property under which he claimed it. Lord Melbourne was provoked out of his usual indifference by this charge so pointedly and forcibly made; and finding from the ironical cheers with which his denial of any connection with O'Connell was met that it was not received with any very undoubting belief, he not only asserted what was true and reasonable, that under a popular Government like ours "it was impossible for any Ad-"ministration wholly to disregard the opinions of persons "of great influence, weight, and authority in the country,

"to whatever causes that influence might be ascribed;" but also asserted that Peel's Government which had preceded his own had seemed to have no object but that of courting popular support; and "that the whole of their "measures had been in his opinion a series of clap-traps, "such as were thought calculated to win and gain over "the people."

Assertions like this called up the Duke, who convincingly refuted the charge thus made by a reference both to the measures which the late Government of which he had been a member had brought forward, and also to the language used by his colleagues in proposing them. And not long afterwards he gave another eminent proof of the promptitude and effect with which he could stand forward in the defence of his friends, when the angry vehemence of Lord Holland had provoked Lord Lyndhurst to take a review of the conduct of the ministers throughout the Session, which he repeated with most damaging effect to their characters on two or three subsequent occasions. So bitterly did the Prime Minister feel the severity of the attacks thus made upon his policy, that on one occasion he applied to his assailant an expression which in the furious animosity of parties before the Great Rebellion Lord Bristol had made use of respecting Lord Strafford, "that the malignity of his "practices was hugely aggravated by his vast talents, "whereof God had given him the use, and the devil the "application." Had Lord Lyndhurst himself been able to reply, it is probable that Lord Melbourne, even in the height of his exasperation, would have been too prudent to venture on such indecorous virulence; but as he could not rise again in his own defence, the Duke came forward to his support; and having completely vindicated Lord Lyndhurst's conduct and motives, he proceeded to justify

himself and his party as a body; and having exhausted this topic, he glanced off to an indirect criticism of the general conduct of the Government, scarcely less damaging than Lord Lyndhurst's more direct attack; forcing upon the House a comparison between the conduct of the Whig and the Conservative party, whether in or out of office, not much to the advantage of the former. He reminded the minister and the House of the moderation and forbearance which, as he asserted, "had marked the "conduct of the noble lords on his side of the House "throughout the Session;" and more especially of his own abstinence from offering any opposition to the measures of the Administration which was not perfectly unavoidable from his regard to the public interests; and of the invariable "moderation of the terms in which he "had from time to time assigned his reasons for that "opposition." Lord Melbourne had argued that if the conduct of his Administration had been as discreditable and injurious as Lord Lyndhurst had pronounced it to be, it was the duty of the Conservative party to take more decisive steps to remove them from office. But the Duke easily excused his followers for declining to take such steps by a reference to the manner in which the existing ministers had attained their present situations; and avowing that "he really did not wish to see Lord "Melbourne removed," he seized the opportunity of giving him some advice, which when contrasted as it could not fail to be with the line which the Government had hitherto followed, was the bitterest of all possible satires. He recommended him for the future to take a larger view of his own position and duty as minister, and "to consider himself not as a minister of a democratic "body in another place, but as the minister of a King "in a limited monarchy of great extent, having a great

" population with various interests, and to frame his " measures in such a manner as might suit the interests " of all, in such a manner as might meet the good- " will of all, and not of one particular party in one parti- " cular place." And he promised him " every facility in " forwarding his measures " if he would adopt that constitutional view of his position. Most especially did he insist on the necessity of the Minister submitting to be guided by such a rule of conduct while considering or preparing measures in which the Church was concerned; reminding him that " the maintenance of the Church of " England was not only the old policy of the country, " steadily persevered in for three hundred years; but was " moreover a policy which had been formally sanctioned " by both Houses of Parliament eight or nine years " before, when they revised the safeguards by which the " Church up to that time had been defended."

Acting still in that spirit of forbearance which as he truly boasted had hitherto distinguished his conduct, he abstained from any formal censure of, or opposition to the foreign policy pursued by the Government; though no laboured assault upon it could have condemned it more in the eyes of all who took an interest in the subject, than the tone of dignified humanity in which he expressed his regret that, " on account of the interest which he really " and sincerely felt for a country in which he had served " so long," they should have " departed from the principle " of the arrangements which had been entered into under " his direction;" the noble Eliot Convention which did so much honour to him who had suggested it, and some credit even to those who readily entered into it; and with a similar feeling he gave vent to his regret that the ministers had " encouraged an active interference in the " hostilities now being carried on in Spain," which had

been developed by what Lord Lyndhurst had deservedly stigmatized as "a miserable buccaneering expedition un-" worthy of a great and powerful nation which had ren-" dered us odious to Spain, ridiculous and contemptible " to the rest of the world."

For Lord Melbourne had hardly been reinstated in his office when, in spite of his own Quadruple Treaty, which had been framed in the wise spirit of non-interference, he yielded to the entreaties of those who, while they professed to have the interests of Queen Christina at heart, were in reality more concerned for the state of the Spanish funds; and by an Order in Council suspended the Foreign Enlistment Act so far as to allow the Queen's Government to raise 10,000 men in Great Britain, which, under the name of the British Legion, and under the command of Colonel Evans, an officer who had been distinguished for more than one act of daring courage in the great Peninsular war, landed in Spain in the course of the summer. Evans's operations proved of very slight benefit to the cause in which he had enlisted himself; but his mere arrival put an end to the benefits which Spain had derived from the Eliot Convention; since, the moment that he landed, Don Carlos, with a severity justified by the laws of nations if not by those of humanity, declared that the soldiers of his Legion were not entitled to any protection from its provisions, as engaging in warfare without any commission from their own Sovereign. And as he did not suffer his threat to become a dead letter, but put to death all the British legionaries who fell into his hands, both parties relapsed into even more than their former ferocity; slaughtering even women in cold blood, till, as the Duke truly said, "all mankind was shocked " at their atrocities."

For four miserable years did the struggle continue:

several battles were fought with indecisive results; in some the Legion behaved very ill; in one or two instances, supported by the guns of a British squadron which lay on the northern coast, it repelled the Carlists, saving Bilbao from falling into their hands, and affording timely relief to St. Sebastian. But generally the advantage in the military operations was on the side of the Carlists, whose commanders were clearly superior in skill and energy to their antagonists. More destructive than battles riots and revolutions broke out from time to time in almost every province: at one time the Eastern districts proposed to form a separate republic; at another, Christina proclaimed the disgraced and often discarded Constitution of 1812: but each revolution was inaugurated and closed by massacre; till at last, after the Legion had returned to England with its own numbers greatly lessened, and the military reputation of the country somewhat sullied by its want of success, dissensions and suspicions which arose among the Carlists produced results which the arms of the Christina soldiers would never have effected. Don Carlos, having quarrelled with several of his most enterprising generals, and fancying himself betrayed by them, retired into France; and in August 1839 the war was formally terminated by a convention agreed upon by the generals on both sides; and Isabella was acknowledged throughout the kingdom as Queen of Spain.

These events made, as was natural, a deep impression on the mind of Wellington; and though, as he said, "a "consideration of the position which the House of Lords "at that time occupied with respect both to the House "of Commons and to the Ministry," had led him to resolve to abstain from any such interference with the Executive Government of the kingdom as would have been exerted by bringing forward any formal motion in

condemnation of their policy, he did not feel it right to leave them in ignorance of his opinion on the affairs of a country with which he was so intimately acquainted, or on their own errors, not only in their general policy towards that country, but also in the means which they had adopted for carrying it out. It was the more necessary for him to put his sentiments fairly before Parliament, because Lord Holland, in a feeble attempt to reply to one of Lord Lyndhurst's withering attacks, had ventured to assert that the foreign policy which Lord Lyndhurst condemned had been approved by Wellington himself, inasmuch as he when in office "had in no "respect varied the policy of his predecessors, who, in "returning to power, had not departed from the same "line of conduct which he had ratified by continuing it." Of such an assertion the Duke's refutation was easy. He reminded the House that on his succeeding to the seals of the Foreign Office he had found a treaty (the Quadruple Treaty) in existence; and "though he was aware "that it had not always been the practice for a British "minister to execute the articles of a treaty which he "had not made and which he disapproved," he had considered it his duty as a minister of the Crown, having a regard above all things to the reputation of his Sovereign and of his country for scrupulous good faith, "to carry "into effect any treaties with which his Majesty had "entered, without any regard to his own original opinion "of their merits."

But he also maintained that, though he had adhered to their treaty, the present ministers had themselves violated it. The spirit of the Quadruple Treaty was "that "there should be no armed intervention in the internal "affairs of Spain;" and such he declared had been the interpretation which France, the ministers of which

nation he had himself consulted on the subject, had also put upon it. Moreover, if the good of Spain and the termination of its unhappy divisions had been our sole object, it would have been attained far more easily and more certainly by a strict preservation of the neutrality enjoined by the Quadruple Treaty than by any more active interposition; since we ought "to have felt that "the real strength of this country, in a case such as we had "before us, consists in that influence which it possesses, "founded on its justice, its fairness, its disinterestedness, "and the wisdom of its councils." And that influence a strict neutrality between the two contending factions would have given us over both; but Wellington fairly contended that the moment that we interfered actively to assist the one party we lost all our influence over the other. And he carried the conviction not merely of the House, but of the whole country with him, when he affirmed that the ministers by the suspension of the Foreign Enlistment Act had lent themselves to be the tools of a stock-jobbing party in this country, whose object was "to have the name of Great Britain mixed up "with the war in Spain for their own financial purposes." He also successfully contended that as far as our interference had any other aim it was rather the support of certain extreme political opinions, constitutional as their advocates termed them, revolutionary as they appeared to himself, than the settlement of the succession to the Spanish crown. And moreover that the existence and prevalence of those extreme opinions was in itself a sufficient reason for our avoiding to interfere at all. He pointed out, supported by the irresistible evidence of facts, that the course which our ministers had adopted "had neither benefited the military or financial state of "affairs in Spain, nor promoted peace." He affirmed of

his own certain knowledge that by it great numbers of people in Spain had actually been ruined, finding their properties confiscated, their lives imperilled, and in many instances sacrificed; and that no political advantage whatever had been attained by it. And he avowed and reiterated his unchanging opinion, that the only conduct which was consistent with the welfare of Spain, and with the maintenance of our own national dignity, was a resumption of that neutral position which we ought never to have relinquished.

There can probably be no doubt now, even in the minds of those who at the time approved of the conduct of the ministers, that the Duke's objections were well founded, and that the policy which he recommended would have been best not only for our own national credit, but for the interests of Spain itself. And even if any one should question this, there can surely be no one who would not applaud the forbearance with which, though quite certain of a majority in the House of Lords if he had thought fit to make a formal attack upon the ministers, he abstained from doing so (though such a step would have been only a very inadequate retaliation for the factious opposition by which they had lately driven himself and his party from office); and instead aided them with advice, the adoption of which would in his opinion have given them such a title to the respect of the nation as might have enabled them still to hold their posts with credit.

Nor did he countenance any express condemnation of their policy in Ireland, where Lord Normanby was ruling with a plausible weakness, which placed all the real power in the island at O'Connell's feet. It was too true that the policy of the English Government with respect to Ireland during the earlier part of the century

had been one of ill-judged exclusiveness, which gave the Roman Catholics only too great a pretext for representing themselves as the victims of unmerited oppression. Lord Wellesley however had inaugurated a better and a wiser because a juster system, holding the balance impartially between the two sects of Protestants and Roman Catholics; and his line of conduct had in the main been followed by Lord Anglesey, and, as was natural, had been resumed by himself when he returned to Ireland under Lord Grey's Administration. But the less steady foot of Lord Normanby * was unequal to the task of following in the steps of that great man, and, gradually straying more and more from the path of moderation and impartiality, he began to deal as unfairly with the Protestants as ever the Orange Viceroys a quarter of a century earlier had acted towards the Roman Catholics; and the excessive preference thus apparently displayed for the Roman Catholics produced even more mischievous effects upon both sects than that which had formerly been exhibited towards the Protestants. The latter, as the Duke remarked in a discussion which arose on a petition on the subject presented by Lord Downshire, were the main support of the English Government and of the Union, and yet they were now wholly alienated from the Government; nor was it strange that this should be their feeling when the exultation felt by the Roman Catholics had excited them to such an organized system of outrage, that he at the same time affirmed as a notorious fact that "neither Protestant life nor Pro-"testant property was secure in Ireland." Political agitation, the invariable parent of outrage, was openly

* As yet he was only Earl Mulgrave, not being created Marquess of Normanby till 1839; but it seemed better to call him as from the first by the title by which he is most generally known.

encouraged by the selection for important offices connected with the administration and execution of the law of members of a political society called the General Association, of which one of the most openly avowed objects was the overthrow of the Protestant Established Church; and, as if this practice did not by itself throw sufficient doubts upon the impartiality of the administration of justice, the Lord-Lieutenant introduced another practice stranger still, namely, that of visiting the gaols in various districts of the country, and without any but the most hurried inquiry releasing great numbers of prisoners. Lord Wellesley jestingly attributed his conduct to his having mistaken the ancient allegory, and having fancied Mercy blind instead of Justice; but the result of such conduct was too serious to allow it to be long made a subject for a joke. The natural consequence was that crimes of every kind, and especially those of the most atrocious description, increased beyond all precedent; while such was the difficulty of procuring evidence against the criminals that convictions were almost unattainable. Nevertheless, though branding this conduct in deservedly strong terms, Wellington would not as yet countenance any formal motion on the subject; nor was it till two years' further continuance of it had plunged the island into a state of disturbance and crime unprecedented even in Ireland, that he would support a motion for its condemnation, which was then brought forward by Lord Brougham with irresistible eloquence and truth of facts and soundness of argument, and was carried against the whole strength of the Government by a very large majority.

Nor, though many of his followers were very desirous that he should do so, would he oppose the ministerial Bill for the reform of the Municipal Corporations in

Ireland, which was brought in a second time in 1837. The alterations which had been made in it since Lord Melbourne abandoned it in the preceding year were of the most trivial description; indeed so completely ineffective, that at a meeting held at Apsley House to consider it the majority of the Peers present urged the Duke to refuse to assent to its second reading. He himself had pressed upon the Prime Minister the propriety of postponing it till two other measures affecting Ireland which he had announced, one on the subject of a Poor Law, the other on that of Tithes, should be also before the House, so that the three Bills might be considered together, as standing in a kind of mutual relation to one another. And he certainly was not pleased at the peremptory refusal which his suggestion had encountered; but still he would not indulge any personal feeling on the subject, and prevailed on his friends to suffer the Bill to go into committee, that they might again amend it so as to render it a safe and useful measure: as before, his party easily carried the amendments which they proposed, and, as before, Lord Melbourne again abandoned the Bill; but its loss is clearly to be imputed not to the Conservative party, who only followed the same line of conduct which they had pursued towards the English Bill on the same subject, but to the Ministry, whom their dependence on the Roman Catholic party in Ireland prevented from acquiescing in those principles in this case to which they had consented in the other.

The only instance in which Wellington opposed the principle of any ministerial measure at this time was that of the Oxford and Cambridge Statutes Bill, which, though not indeed brought in by any member of the Cabinet, but by Lord Radnor, was nevertheless so eagerly supported

by the whole weight and influence of the ministers, that it may fairly be looked upon as their own. Its object was to institute a parliamentary inquiry into the statutes of the different colleges at both the Universities, with the avowed intention of remodelling them to suit the views of the introducer of the Bill. The Bishop of Llandaff,* who had himself been the head of one of the most celebrated colleges at Oxford, moved its rejection; and the Duke warmly supported the bishop, pronouncing the Bill "neither more nor less than one of pains and penal-"ties against the two Universities," the provisions of which, unjustifiable in themselves, were rendered doubly dangerous by the secret views with which they were introduced and supported; Lord Radnor having on a former occasion avowed his desire † to put an end to the oaths and tests by which the system of education pursued in the Universities was inseparably connected with the Church of England; and Lord Melbourne having proclaimed his wish "to establish in them a system of "disputation on religious matters," which must be fatal to academical discipline, and deeply injurious to the cause of true religion. In defending the Universities and their existing system, the Duke took the same high ground on which he had formerly rested his opposition to the admission of Dissenters, which had been advocated by the same parties, and displayed a very remarkable acquaintance with both the principles and the details of University government. Not that he was blind to the fact that the inevitable changes of time had made some improvements practicable and desirable; in fact, as has been already mentioned, he had himself recommended some reforms to the chief authorities at Oxford, who

* Dr. Coplestone, formerly Provost of Oriel College, Oxford.

† See chap. LI.

were at this very time occupied in the consideration of the best means of giving effect to his recommendations. But he claimed for both his own and the sister University "the merit of having established in England an "excellent system of education, which is in point of "fact the envy and admiration of the world." And he reasonably claimed for bodies which had done such important service to the nation that Parliament should take an indulgent view of any deficiencies which might be imputed to them; and should give them credit for an intelligence and rectitude of intention which should entitle them to be trusted with the task of adapting their ancient institutions to the requirements of modern times, to which they could not reasonably be presumed to be insensible or indifferent.

As may easily be supposed with so strong a case, and with such a body as the House of Peers, his opposition was successful. It does not belong to the present work to relate how fully Oxford by her own spontaneous reforms has justified his panegyric on the enlightened spirit which animated her rulers, and has given herself fresh vitality, not by such a process as Lord Radnor recommended, which would have resembled Medea's remedy of cutting the aged body to pieces for the chance of being able to boil it up again into youth and vigour; but rather like Antæus, by planting her feet again firmly on the soil from which she had taken her first spring; the vigorous zeal for intellectual progress, and the healthy spirit of reverence for ancient institutions which, when duly combined, afford the surest foundation for a superstructure likely because deserving to endure, by commanding in its turn the respect and affection of the people among whom it is established.

CHAPTER LIV.

Death of William IV.—Publication of Wellington's Despatches—His performance of the duties of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports: and of Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire—Coronation of the Queen—Visit of Marshal Soult to England.

THE discussions mentioned in the past chapter were the last that occupied the attention of Parliament during the reign of William IV. On the 20th of June 1837 that monarch died after a short illness; and was succeeded by her present Most Gracious Majesty, whose sex and youth, giving to the Duke's principles of faithful obedience to his Sovereign a fresh tinge of chivalrous loyalty, disposed him more than ever to avoid embarrassing her ministers by any opposition which was not forced from him by a most imperative sense of duty; so that he often preferred keeping silence on matters of minor importance, or even absenting himself from Parliament when such questions were discussed, to increasing the cares to which his youthful mistress was as yet unaccustomed, by being too hasty in exposing the incompetence of her advisers, which, in every department of the empire was becoming day by day more glaring and unconcealable.

His comparative political inactivity however was far

from being useless to his country. On the contrary, he partly occupied his leisure at this time by assisting his old comrade and esquire, Colonel Gurwood, in preparing for publication the despatches which he had had occasion to write during his campaigns in India, in the Peninsula, and in Belgium. In general he set no very great value on historical publications, thinking that very few of them either gave or could give a really true account of the events which they professed to relate: and his dislike of literary controversy was so great that, though he had furnished Napier with many particulars for his book, he never read it,* in order to avoid being appealed to by either the champions or the impugners of its correctness. But shortly after the period when his opposition to the Reform Bill had absorbed all his attention, Colonel Gurwood, who had retained a high place in his favour ever since he first attracted his notice at Ciudad Rodrigo, persuaded him to set the entire history of his military achievements before the world by the publication of these despatches, which came out at intervals during the next four or five years. Composed in such a variety of countries, and addressed to such a variety of persons, it is not strange that the collection was at first far from complete: and the filial piety of the present Duke, justly feeling that the more thoroughly every feeling and motive and opinion of his great father is known the greater will be the admiration for his virtues entertained by his countrymen, has diligently occupied himself in researches which have greatly enlarged it, and have enabled him to give to the world several volumes of additional letters, many of which, though referring to subjects of comparatively

* See a letter of his to Mr. Perceval, quoted in Napier, vol. v., introduction, p. xlix.

ancient date, are but little inferior in interest and importance to those first published. Incomplete however as the original compilation inevitably was, it at once elevated Wellington's reputation in a degree inconceivable to those who consider how vast that reputation already was with the world in general, and who can hardly imagine how greatly party spirit, which had at first almost denied his merits, still prevailed to conceal their transcendent lustre from the eyes of many. But this publication of all his despatches in their most ungarbled entireness for ever dispelled all the clouds thus previously raised around him. By them the record of all his hopes and fears, of all his dangers and difficulties, and of all his plans for surmounting them, were laid without disguise before the world. Napier's great work had shown no little of his character, but now for the first time it was fully revealed how little he owed to others, how much to himself. Now for the first time it was fully seen how worthless were our allies, and how he alone compelled them to exertion in their own behalf, and saved them in their own despite; how timid and irresolute were our own rulers, and how he supported those from whom he ought rather to have received support; pointing out to them what he alone of the whole world foresaw, the certainty of ultimate success, in some instances predicting it from the events which to weaker understandings seemed to render it hopeless. Now for the first time was it fully set before the world how little even chance, though it often most vexatiously baffled his most judicious conceptions and robbed him of some of their fairest fruits, can affect the total result of plans dictated by profound sagacity, and carried out with uniform skill and resolution.

Not that the despatches represented him as infallible; on the contrary, they contain occasionally frank avowals of mistaken expectations, of erroneous judgments, of defective execution, sometimes also a record of opinions which subsequent events had proved to be unfounded. But of all these he forbade the slightest suppression or alteration, nor would he even suffer any correction of the imperfect French in which some of his letters to foreign ministers or generals were occasionally couched. His object was to show himself to his countrymen as he really was, and he would no more have countenanced a publication attempting to extol him as infallible, or a history of unmodified panegyric, than a portrait which should have represented him as six feet high, or should have softened down his massive nose to the delicate proportions of the Apollo of the Vatican.

And these volumes were as candidly received as they were frankly published; nor, to their honour be it said, were his most vehement political adversaries at all behind his own partisans in the warmth of their eulogies. Lord Grey, after reading them, avowed that "he had "no hesitation in expressing his conviction that in "every circumstance of public life the Duke was the "greatest man that had ever lived."* And Lord Brougham, regarding him with equal admiration, takes occasion to point out as the most striking of the facts developed in them, the perfect evenness of character which they display, and the absolute identity of the talents and virtues exhibited by him in the outset of his career and at the consummation of his glory.†

Nor has time diminished their reputation. The

* See Raikes's Diary, vol. iv., p. 203.

† 'Sketches of Statesmen of George III.,' vol. ii., p. 355.

boundless prolixity of some authors may perhaps have robbed him of the credit from them which he playfully claimed for himself, of being the most voluminous author of the day; but the judgment at first pronounced upon the wisdom and public virtue shown in every page of them is only strengthened by a repeated perusal; and they still are, and it may be confidently anticipated that they long will be considered as the most admirable repertory of military and political opinions ever furnished by a single individual, and as a most indispensable study for the soldier and the statesman.

His office of Chancellor of Oxford also afforded him considerable occupation: he had, as we have already seen, taken the lead in suggesting to the resident authorities such reformations as the spirit of the time appeared to require; and, as the measures proposed for giving effect to his recommendation naturally produced great disagreements among the different parties in the University, he was constantly appealed to by both sides, and was usually very successful in leading them to a better understanding; surprising them all, not indeed by the uniform impartiality and general soundness of his judgment, for which they were already prepared; but by the thorough acquaintance which he evinced with both the general spirit of the University constitution and even with the details of the statutes of the several colleges, and also with the regulations enacted at different times, whether in force or obsolete, whether adapted to existing circumstances or antiquated in spirit and impracticable in execution.

During the autumn he usually resided at Walmer, and there also he found occupation in a more diligent discharge of the duties of the Lord Warden than had been customary

with his predecessors; but, as he was deeply impressed at all times with a conviction of the faithlessness of Louis Philippe and of the constant probability of his making our shores the object of a hostile attack, and also with an opinion that our rulers had of late reduced our military and naval strength in a degree quite incompatible with our safety in the event of any such attack being attempted, he made frequent examinations of the whole Kentish coast, and of the fortifications with which it was furnished; suggesting measures for putting them in a better state, and taking a deep interest in the formation of such works and harbours as might afford safe stations for our fleets, or enable even militia to offer a solid resistance to any sudden aggression.

In the performance of these duties he made the same impression on all with whom he was brought into contact that he did on the more learned magnates of Oxford. He had acquired, perhaps in his voyages to and from India, a very considerable knowledge of maritime affairs and of naval architecture, and he gave his constant attendance at all the courts* held under his jurisdiction for the local government of the different ports, the appointment and regulation of the pilots, and other matters of similar character, surprising the inferior authorities by the minuteness of the knowledge which he had condescended to master concerning details which they thought unworthy of even their own notice. For the appointment of the pilots he instituted a new and very strict examination; causing two pilots of experience to examine every candidate, and preventing the operation of any unfair bias on their parts by making a rule that the examination should be conducted in the presence and under the superintendence of two of the superior officers

* They were called Courts of Loadmanage, but are now abolished.

of the Cinque Ports. He also established the cruising system, as it is called, so that a pilot cutter or two should always be at sea with several pilots on board, ready to take charge of any vessels that might require their services; and if any complaint was ever made of any neglect of duty or misconduct on the part of these men, he investigated it most rigorously, summoning a court to inquire into the matter, and giving his own strictest attention to the reports which they made; looking and showing that he looked upon himself as responsible for the competency of those on whose skill and good conduct the safety of so many lives and such vast property continually depended. So vigorous indeed and efficient was the superintendence over them which he exercised, and so admirable in consequence was their conduct, that, when he had been twenty years Lord Warden, he was able to say on their behalf, apparently without considering how greatly it redounded to his own credit also, that though since his appointment nearly eighty thousand ships had been brought into the Thames, the number of well-founded complaints which had been brought against any of the pilots scarcely exceeded a dozen.

His winters he spent at Strathfieldsaye, where the agricultural improvements which have been already mentioned were still vigorously prosecuted; so that under his judicious and liberal management the estate increased almost yearly in value. He also considerably augmented it by purchases made from time to time of adjacent lands which came into the market. And the circumstances under which one of these acquisitions was made are strikingly illustrative of the unvarying rigour of his honesty in all transactions, even in those in which men of the world generally, even if reputed of the most spotless honour, consider themselves to have

a fair right to take every advantage which presents itself. For, on his steward congratulating him that he had bought a couple of fields at a price less by three hundred pounds than that at which they had been valued, in consequence of the distress of the owner compelling him to sell them for the first offer, he at once reproved the steward by a command to make no more bargains of that kind for him, and sent the three hundred pounds to the seller of the land; which he had been indeed desirous to possess, but which he was still more desirous not to obtain at a price below its fair value. While in the country too he addicted himself greatly to field sports, though principally from an idea of their contributing to the preservation of his health, for which he was at all times solicitous. Shooting he was fond of for its own sake, and was a tolerable shot, and a very eager investigator of all the different improvements in fowling-pieces, and of the various inventions of detonators, cartridges, and percussion caps. But hunting, though he followed it very regularly, and subscribed liberally to the different packs of hounds in his neighbourhood, he cared about more for the sake of the gallop and the bracing exercise than for the sport itself, and would have been almost equally pleased to have ridden in any other direction could he have found an excuse for riding equally fast, and could he have met the same number of people. But if he was indifferent to the work of the hounds, he was not equally so to horses. For them he had throughout his life a great passion, and though while in India he reckoned himself but an inferior judge of them, by this time practice had made him perfect, and many of his letters to his intimate friends are full of the most minute descriptions of the shape, action, and other qualities

of his possessions in that line or of intended purchases. And he was well qualified not only to appreciate but also to display their excellences, being, as may be easily supposed, though not a good rider to hounds, a most fearless horseman, and having that first of equestrian attributes, a most excellent hand.

At Strathfieldsaye too he was not without official duties, having been appointed Lord-Lieutenant of the county soon after his return from France; and with his habitual personal diligence giving careful attention to even the most trivial details of his duty in that post.

Few things however interested him more while in the country than the condition of the poor, and the working of the new poor law; and he was a constant attendant at the board of guardians, frequently guiding them by his singular administrative tact, which seemed equally at home in the pettiest details of parish business as in the weightiest concerns of a nation; and always eager to suggest anything for the improvement of the condition of the poor, for whom he manifested the keenest sympathy. In fact, he was at all times extremely charitable, giving away large sums to objects whom he believed to be deserving, and being very rarely led to refuse an application for relief even by the discovery which he of course sometimes made, as well as others, that in many instances he had been deceived into a mistaken generosity.

Both in the country and in London he was very fond of society, and there he showed to as much advantage as in other spheres; still retaining much of the lightness of heart and playfulness of manner which, as has been mentioned before, had been so distinguishing a characteristic of him in his earlier years. Those who were

admitted to his intimacy describe him as the most agreeable and engaging of companions; living with those around him on a footing of the most cordial equality, free from all assumption of superiority whether of rank or understanding; full of anecdotes of all kinds of events and of all kinds of people. In his varied characters of soldier, diplomatist, minister, and head of an university, a greater variety of persons, as he was wont to express it, "had passed through his hands" than had probably ever come under the notice of any other individual. And on their actions and characters as well as on the scenes of his own stirring career he was frankly communicative to his friends; though often restive and reserved when others endeavoured, as he considered, "to pump him," especially if they appeared to presume on any kind of fancied importance; or if he suspected them of any design of publishing to the world the information which they thus sought to acquire. He was especially fond of the society of young persons and of ladies, some of whom were his principal correspondents; though in his frank, affable demeanour and unpretending conversation few strangers would have discovered the honoured statesman and the consummate warrior, combining with his cheerful gaiety of feeling the refined courtesy of the old school, which contrasted most advantageously with the rougher tone of modern habits.

Of music he was exceedingly fond; he inherited a taste for it from his father, and had been himself a performer on the violoncello till he relinquished the practice in consequence, it is said, of its having on one occasion caused him, when a very young officer, to forget some trifling detail of military duty; but when his warlike services were completed he thought himself at liberty to indulge his taste, and he became a director of a musical

society then in great vogue, known as the Ancient Concerts, taking the greatest interest in its arrangements, never omitting when his turn came to select the music himself, and showing an invariable preference for the severe and grand style of music over the lighter productions of the modern Italian and French schools.

His hospitality had an especial and singular call made on it in the summer of 1838, when his old antagonist Marshal Soult was sent to England by Louis Philippe as the Ambassador-Extraordinary to represent the King of the French at the Queen's coronation; and he was the more eager to give a courteous and cordial reception to his ancient foe because he had been unsuccessful in preventing the appearance of an article in the 'Quarterly Review,' published with singularly bad taste about a week before the Marshal's arrival, on the subject of the battle of Toulouse, attacking the Frenchman's character and military reputation in most unmeasured terms, and fiercely condemning the selection for the embassy to England of one who had so often stood in battle against her soldiers. From the more chivalrous mind of the Duke all feelings of enmity had passed away with the war (not that he had ever been the enemy of individuals, or had even failed to do justice to the high military talents of the adversary to whom he had been so long opposed), and he now gave more than one splendid banquet in his honour, and on one or two public occasions paid ample tribute to the courage and genius of this gallant visitor of the nation. He himself in the pageant in which the veteran Marshal had come to bear his part for the third time walked as High Constable of England, being hailed, as he did his homage to his youthful mistress amid the acclamations of the people, as the fittest representative of the valour and the chivalry of her three united kingdoms.

CHAPTER LV.

Affairs of Canada—Insurrection in both provinces—Easily quelled at first—Lord Durham is sent to Canada—The illegality of his ordinances—They are disavowed at home—He resigns—Union of the two Canadas—Wellington complains of the weakness of our army.

THE first Parliament of the new Sovereign found its attention instantly occupied with a most important and difficult matter, which had Wellington been less desirous to support the Ministry would have afforded him a more than usual handle for assailing them with irresistible success, since the dangers which had arisen were caused by the neglect of warnings which he himself had given; but which he so dealt with as to gain the still greater victory of extorting from them a unanimous admission of his surpassing candour and magnanimity.

The existing Constitution of Canada had been framed in 1791 by Pitt, who had divided the country into two provinces, under the names of Upper and Lower Canada, and had established in each two parliamentary bodies under the titles of a Legislative Council and a House of Assembly: the latter elective; the former nominated by the Crown, and consisting of members one half of whom had hereditary seats in it, the other half were appointed for life. But though the

1838.

Constitutions of the two provinces were thus identical, the origin and feelings of the citizens were widely dissimilar. The inhabitants of Upper Canada were wholly descended from British ancestors, and having a deep reverence for the British Constitution, were firmly attached to the British connection; but in Lower Canada such a descent and such prejudices were in a minority; the majority of the people were sprung from the original French colonists, were in a considerable degree disaffected towards our rule, and having caught the contagion from the revolution in their mother country and from their American neighbours, were deeply tainted with republican principles.

It was not long before the House of Assembly in Lower Canada became discontented and clamorous for reforms of one kind or another, affecting the constitution of the Legislative Council rather than of itself, but calculated also to procure for itself a greater control over the revenue of the colony than it had previously enjoyed. And in 1828, under the Duke's Administration, on the motion of Huskisson, then Secretary for the Colonies, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to examine into the grievances of which it complained. The report of the committee was extolled by the Assembly of Lower Canada as a perfect specimen of statesmanlike wisdom, and was certainly far from deficient in indulgence to the requirements of the colonists; but before it could be acted upon the Wellington Ministry had retired from office, and it devolved upon their successors to prepare the Bill intended for the redress of those complaints which appeared to be founded in reason.

Unhappily, Lord Grey's Cabinet, full of a spurious liberality, went further in the path of concession than

even the discontented House of Assembly had demanded, and proposed to give the Assembly in both provinces an absolute control over the revenues. Against so impolitic a concession the Duke protested, pronouncing it inconsistent with the genius of the British Constitution "to "leave the civil government of the country, and espe- "cially the judges of the land, to be provided for by an "annual vote instead of by a permanent provision;" and foretelling that, as soon as the Assembly had got possession of the revenues, it would be careless about providing for these necessary payments. He therefore earnestly pressed that the measure should be accompanied by a condition that the House of Assembly should first make a permanent provision for the civil establishment of the province. He stood almost alone in his forebodings, and his suggestion was overruled; but he had formed an accurate judgment of the temper of the Lower Canadians, and what he had predicted speedily came to pass. The House of Assembly in Lower Canada absolutely refused to grant a civil list, or to make any provision whatever for the payment of the judges and other necessary officers of the Government, and persisted so long in this culpable neglect of its duty that at the accession of Queen Victoria the judges had been four years and a half without receiving any salaries whatever, till, as the Duke stated in Parliament, "some of them "were literally starving, and had been compelled to pawn "their books and clothes in order to obtain a scanty "subsistence for themselves and their families." And not content with this misconduct, the Assembly demanded the enactment of laws which should for the future place both the Legislative and the Executive Councils at their mercy, and so enable them to continue it as long as they pleased; requiring that the Legislative

Council should for the future be elected by the people instead of being, as hitherto, appointed by the Crown; and that the Executive Council should be made responsible to the House of Assembly.

Lord Melbourne's Ministry was weak enough in most departments, but it happened most unfortunately at this crisis that it was nowhere weaker than at the Colonial Office, which was presided over by Lord Glenelg,* a man of great private worth and amiability, but of very slight capacity, and wholly destitute of energy, decision, or strength of mind. He met the disloyal neglect and dishonest demands of the Lower Canadians by proposing to Parliament a series of resolutions, of which both those which were severe and those which were conciliatory appeared to Wellington almost equally objectionable, since some of them provided for the payment of the arrears of salaries due by authorizing the Governor-General to take the money at that time in the provincial treasury, and whatever sums should hereafter be paid in, and to apply them to that purpose; while others qualified the statement "that in the existing state of "Lower Canada it was unadvisable to make the Legis-"lative Council of that province an elective body, and "also to subject the Executive Council to the responsi-"bility demanded by the House of Assembly," by the admission that "it was expedient to adopt measures for "securing to the Executive Council a greater degree of "public confidence, and to improve the composition of "the Executive Council." The Duke expressed grave doubts whether it was within the power of the British Parliament by a mere resolution to give the Governor-General authority to seize the revenues of the province for any object however desirable; and objected still more

* Known a few years before as Mr. Charles Grant.

strongly to the terms in which the refusal to make the Legislative Council elective was couched, as if that refusal were only conditional and temporary, while in fact the demand was wholly inconsistent with the principles of the British Constitution, and, as such, one which ought to be rejected absolutely and peremptorily. He admitted it to be the duty of the Government "to be careful in the administration of the "affairs of the colonies to avoid any acts of an unkind "or ungracious character towards their local assemblies, "but at the same time insisted that it should avoid "holding out expectations to them which it did not mean "to carry into full execution." He would not however propose any formal amendment to the resolutions, thinking that, as the ministers must bear the responsibility of the measures which should be adopted, it was not fitting to interfere with their discretion.

But the adoption of these resolutions had hardly become known on the other side of the Atlantic when the Lower Province broke into open rebellion, which an ill-advised party in Upper Canada also endeavoured to copy, but with singular ill success. A person of the name of Papineau, of French extraction, as his name denoted, who had been one of the leaders of the malcontents, placed himself at the head of some small bodies of armed men who seized the villages of St. Denis and St. Charles, and resisted the troops sent to dislodge them. Fortunately at this juncture the Commander of the Forces in Canada was Sir John Colborne, the celebrated colonel of the 52nd in the Peninsular war and at Waterloo; and while his inferior officers easily dislodged the insurgents at St. Denis and St. Charles, he himself at the head of the main body of the Queen's troops marched against the chief force of the rebels,

which had taken post on the river Utawa at the village of St. Eustache, routed it with but little difficulty: Papineau in alarm fled to New York, and for a while the insurrection was crushed in Lower Canada.

Almost at the same time a still more abortive attempt at insurrection had been made in Upper Canada, where a person of the name of Mackenzie assembled a band of desperadoes and attacked Toronto, the metropolis of that province; but he was easily repelled by the militia under Colonel Macnab, to whom Sir Francis Head, the Lieutenant-Governor, with a bold reliance on the loyalty of the colonists in general which alarmed many, and which required, as it met, the most complete success to justify it, had trusted the safety of the city, which he had entirely denuded of regular troops, having sent all the regiments at his disposal to support their comrades in Lower Canada. Mackenzie, as well as Papineau, fled to New York, secure of an asylum among the Americans, of whom a considerable number openly advocated their cause, and some calling themselves "Sympathizers" had even, in spite of the warning and disavowal of the President of the United States, taken up arms to assist them. But Macnab had no sooner beaten the rebels from Toronto than he prepared to attack their American allies, who had occupied an island in the St. Lawrence, within our territory; he seized an armed steamer by which they procured supplies from their own side of the river, set her adrift so that she was dashed to pieces over the Falls of Niagara, and compelled the occupiers of the island, whom their own Government was forced to denounce as pirates, to retire to their own shore.

But the news of the outbreak reached England some time before the intelligence of its suppression, and

produced great alarm in the Ministry. They at once sent out a considerable force; and, as the new Parliament, the first of the present reign, had met in November and had only been adjourned over the Christmas recess, at its re-assembling in the middle of January they at once brought forward measures calculated in their opinion to meet the emergency; proposing to send out Lord Durham to investigate on the spot the grievances complained of by the Lower Canadians, and to invest him with almost plenary powers to redress any that should appear to have a real existence, and so to remodel the Constitution of the two provinces as to prevent their recurrence.

When the subject was brought before the House of Lords, Wellington's objection was not so much to the principle of the measures recommended by the Government, as to the manner in which they introduced them. As a preliminary step the ministers in each House moved an Address to the Queen, expressing the regret of Parliament at the state of affairs in Canada, and promising to support her Majesty in whatever efforts she might make for the suppression of the revolt, the restoration of tranquillity, and the permanent maintenance of the integrity of the empire. But the Duke, with a more correct appreciation of the magnitude of the crisis and of what was due to the dignity of the Crown, contended that the more proper course would have been for them to have brought down a message from the Sovereign, announcing that acts of hostility had already been committed against her subjects, and demanding the concurrence of Parliament in the measures which she was prepared to adopt. He complained that the ministers were reluctant "to speak out," and to let the country understand plainly the ground which they

designed to take. And he urged that the sooner that was fully understood, the sooner would an end be put to the revolt. With great earnestness he entreated them to make their preparations for its suppression on an ample scale; and, in words the wisdom of which has made them proverbial, implored them "not to forget "that a great country like this can have no such thing "as a little war." Lord Brougham in a most argumentative, and eloquent though somewhat too vehement speech, had considered every step of the conduct of the ministers in reference to these transactions, and had pronounced them manifestly unfit to deal with the present emergency. But the Duke with a calmer and more equal judgment avowed that, though he differed from them on some points, being still of opinion that it was the disregard of his warnings in 1831 which had brought matters into their present condition, "by "enabling a small party to raise the people against the "Government, he did not think them to blame for not "having adopted more active measures, or sent out "more troops to Canada during the past summer, be-"cause no one, not even Lord Gosford, the Governor, "nor Sir John Colborne, the Commander-in-Chief, had "at that time entertained the very slightest apprehen-"sion of any insurrection." He also professed himself quite satisfied with the language held by the Prime Minister, when, in reply to a strange assertion of Lord Brougham that the Canadian colonies were of little value to us, Lord Melbourne had vigorously asserted a contrary opinion, and had avowed his own feeling to be that the true interests of this country, as well as the dignity of the Crown, were intimately concerned in preserving them in their loyal obedience. It might easily have been foreseen what an echo such sentiments would find

in the Duke's breast; and it no doubt had contributed to produce the resolution which he expressed to support the Government in whatever measures they might think fit to adopt; only avowing his objection to a project which he fancied that he perceived lurking beneath some of their propositions, to establish "something like "a convention for the formation of a Constitution in "Lower Canada;" since such a convention would be "absolutely incompatible with the relative position of "this country and its colonies, it being the undeniable "right of the mother country to give them a Constitu- "tion by her own authority;" and he reminded them of a fact which their impetuous assailant Lord Brougham had forgotten, that since Lower Canada was inhabited by two distinct races, the very concessions which were so clamorously demanded by the French party in the House of Assembly would be in exactly the same proportion unpalatable to the British party; and that under any circumstances to make the Legislative Council an elective body would be a step inconsistent with the Constitution of the British monarchy.

The ministers were far from insensible of the wisdom of his language, or slow to acknowledge its generosity. Lord Ripon, who had been Lord Grey's Colonial Secretary, admitted that his prophecy of the results of the Act of 1831 had been completely fulfilled; Lord Lansdowne and Lord Glenelg thankfully recognized in the whole tone of his speech "a rare spirit of generous can- "dour, a mind strengthened by long application to "the great business of the country, and anxious only "to do justice to its great interests, especially careful "to do justice even to his political opponents; and soli- "citous by the same genius he had already exercised "in rescuing the kingdom from danger on another

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"theatre, to rescue it again in a different sphere from "the possible diminution of its colonial greatness;" while Lord Durham professed that, from the candour and generosity which had distinguished the Duke's remarks upon this as well as all other occasions, he himself derived a confidence that Wellington and those who thought with him would give him credit for good intentions, which would be his greatest encouragement in the task of awful responsibility which he had undertaken.

It might almost seem that the confidence with which the new Governor of Canada was thus inspired was unfortunate, if it led him to trust too much to the goodness of his intentions to take the requisite care to carry them out with a proper regard to the law. The rectitude of his intentions, and his acuteness of intellect, no one could doubt; but his very first steps after his appointment showed that the former was coupled with a dangerous degree of self-will, and that the latter was very little tempered with discretion. With singular perverseness of judgment, before he left England he selected among the principal members of his establishment two men whose characters had been branded in the courts of law for almost unparalleled profligacy, and one of whom had been criminally convicted, and had suffered a lengthened term of imprisonment for his offence. And immediately on his arrival in Canada he dissolved the existing Executive Council and formed a new one consisting of only five members, and those taken almost entirely from his own secretaries, and created a Legislative Council on a similarly small scale, containing some of the same individuals as its members; showing plainly that his intention was to exert the whole power of Government himself, without advice and

without control. And if such an idea was ill advised, the manner in which he did exert his power soon proved more ill advised still. Many of the persons most deeply implicated in the late rebellion were in prison awaiting their trials, and it was apprehended, if indeed it may not be rather said it was known, that in the temper prevailing in Lower Canada it would be almost impossible to find a jury to convict them. Lord Glenelg, though fully aware of this state of affairs, had especially directed that they should be tried according to the established forms of law, but of this injunction Sir John Colborne, who had acted as Governor of Lower Canada in the interval which elapsed between Lord Gosford's resignation and Lord Durham's arrival, disapproved, as did the Council which he had appointed, and which had just been dissolved. Lord Durham therefore determined to take the law into his own hands, and having by a strange kind of compromise prevailed upon some of the ringleaders of the rebellion to make a partial acknowledgment of their guilt and to submit themselves to his discretion, he issued an ordinance banishing them to Bermuda, and declaring that their return to Canada should render them liable to the penalty of death.

Such a measure was very different from those which had been proposed with the same object by Colborne and his Council, who had proceeded in strict conformity with the Local Acts of the province.* But this ordinance of Lord Durham was at once seen to be illegal in all its parts. Sir Stephen Chapman, the Governor of Bermuda, wrote to him to explain that he had no power to detain the persons sent to him as prisoners;

* See 'Annual Register,' 1838, p. 253, 256, where both Colborne's and Lord Durham's ordinances are given.

though, as a momentary escape from the difficulty, he consented to receive them in the island and to take their parole to remain there; but when the news of the ordinance thus issued reached England, it appeared to require more serious notice.

The condemnation of the measure however came in the first instance not from the Conservative Opposition, but from the late Whig Chancellor, who as having been at one time at the head of his profession in England, thought himself especially called upon to reprove such a flagrant violation of all the principles of law as was involved in this ordinance. He declared that if Lord Durham were to put any man to death for returning to Canada in violation of its threats he would be guilty of murder. But still he did full justice to the rectitude of his intentions in issuing it, and also to its beneficial character had there been any power vested in him to transport persons to or to detain them in Bermuda, an island wholly beyond his jurisdiction. He therefore proposed himself to bring in a Bill which, though proclaiming the illegality of the ordinance, should yet indemnify the Governor who had issued it, and the subordinate officers who had acted under it. The Bill was introduced and carried, but the discussions which took place on the subject exhibited an astonishing amount of weakness and disagreement in the Ministry. Lord Glenelg at first denied the ordinance to be illegal, while Lord Melbourne admitted that it was so. Two days later Lord Glenelg also confessed its illegality, and yet denied that the act of issuing or obeying it required an indemnity; and Lord Melbourne, who joined him in his opposition to Lord Brougham's Bill, objected curiously enough to a question of law being brought into discussion by a lawyer, and tried to draw a kind

of argument in favour of the ordinance from the universal condemnation pronounced upon it by every lawyer, inasmuch as "the profession of the law did little "more than invariably fetter the understandings of its "professors." With an equal defiance of logic and common sense he proceeded to attack the Conservative Opposition for supporting Lord Brougham's Bill, asserting that, since they had concurred in the appointment of Lord Durham, by now withdrawing their confidence from him "they had done something very like laying a "trap for him; acting like one of those jealous aristo-"cracies that formerly existed, in which the members "in their wish to weaken and overthrow the authority "of their opponents sacrificed the interests of their "country."

Insinuations like these Wellington treated with merited contempt. On the first night on which Lord Brougham had introduced the subject, he had contented himself with affirming that "though he disapproved "of attacking Lord Durham night after night, yet "when acts had been performed in which his conduct "had been positively illegal, it was absolutely necessary "for Parliament to adopt some measure which might "set the Government right on the subject, and apply "a remedy as soon as possible." But on the second reading of the Bill of Indemnity he entered more fully into the question. With respect to his own conduct he avowed that at the time of Lord Durham's appointment he had supported the Government, thinking it a case of great emergency, and looking upon it as his duty to do everything in his power to strengthen the hands of the Ministry at home, and of the officer whom they, being acquainted with him, which he himself was not, considered "most qualified to act as Governor of

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"Canada." He had done more, he said, he had forborne all comment on the earlier proceedings of the new Governor, though entertaining a decided opinion upon the want of wisdom and propriety displayed by him in nominating as the members of his council not "persons intimately acquainted with the condition of "Canada, and conversant with the laws and with the "constitution of the country, but his own secretaries "and aides-de-camp." And also upon the manner in which the ministers at home neglected the duties belonging to them, of "giving instructions to the Governor "as to what persons he was to appoint as members of "his special council." To the unwarrantable composition of the council he ascribed the illegal proceedings under discussion, and for that he argued irresistibly that the neglect of these duties by the Prime Minister and the Secretary for the Colonies had made them responsible jointly with Lord Durham. He admitted that he had sanctioned the investment of the new Governor with ample powers; but how could his conduct in this respect imply any sanction of an illegal use of those powers. That illegality was now admitted, and it was "no mere technical error, or one having "reference to small or nice points of law, but one of "great magnitude, and relating to points of the most "grave importance; the act was so clearly illegal that "no man capable of understanding the first principles "of justice could doubt its impropriety." Yet even now he had no wish to embarrass the Government, but would have been contented to leave the matter in their hands if they would have avowed their willingness themselves "to take steps to set the matter right." But he maintained that it was "impossible to delay giving "instant indemnity to those officers, whether in Canada,

" at sea, or in Bermuda, to whom the execution of Lord " Durham's ordinance had been entrusted."

His speech, though not lasting above half an hour, made a great impression on the House; it was impossible to avoid seeing that an illegal action, however well intended, required a bill of indemnity, and that so far were they who supported the investiture of a governor with ample powers restricted from censuring his subsequent abuse of them, that the exact contrary of such a proposition was the truth, and that the very amplitude of the powers granted rendered any misapplication of them the more inexcusable. And the country in general fully shared the Duke's indignation at being said to have laid a trap for either Lord Durham or for the ministers by supporting their measures from a confidence that they would not themselves neglect to perform the duties which their own measure imposed upon them.

Lord Brougham's Bill, as has been already mentioned, was carried, and the next day Lord Melbourne announced that he had advised the Queen to disallow the ordinances thus condemned; though with great reluctance, and with serious fear lest their disallowance should be looked upon by the rebellious party in Canada as a great encouragement. The Duke approved of the course taken by Lord Melbourne, repudiated all share in his apprehensions, and recommended him " to enter into a re- " vision of the whole power and authority committed " to the Governor of Canada; to take the whole of the " existing laws into consideration, and then to prepare " one new comprehensive Act;" advice which Lord Lansdowne, the President of the Council, at once admitted to be the most suitable for the circumstances. Evidently neither the Duke nor Lord Lansdowne antici-

pated the effect which the conduct of the Ministry would produce upon the mind of Lord Durham. Since the promulgation of his ordinances that nobleman had employed himself most usefully in a careful investigation of the state of the Crown lands within the province, which had previously been greatly mismanaged; and of the possibility of making them available for the promotion of an extensive system of emigration; he had travelled through the two provinces, prosecuting a variety of useful inquiries in his progress, and accumulating a vast mass of important information which he was preparing to embody in a formal report to the Home Government, and which in fact, when he did lay it before the country, as he speedily did, was acknowledged by all parties to be a most valuable paper, justifying in many respects the choice which had been made of him as Governor of a colony of such great importance, and yet so little understood in England.

Unhappily, as his discretion was not equal to his acuteness, so neither was his temper equal to his statesmanlike capacity. The moment he received intelligence that his ordinances had been disallowed, he was seized with uncontrollable indignation, and resigned his office; communicating his intention to Lord Glenelg in an angry despatch, in which he maintained that no part of his ordinances had been illegal; and also to the people of Canada, in a proclamation of a character utterly unprecedented, in which he actually laid open to the colonists the whole of the differences between himself and the Ministry at home, because, to use his own words, "with a people from whom he had had so many "and such gratifying proofs of attachment he could "have no reserve." And then he proceeded to state his own views of the power with which he had been

entrusted in language which must have been almost as unpleasing to both races in Lower Canada, as it was inconsistent with every principle which it was possible to suppose that any party in the British Parliament could have sanctioned. He declared that his authority had been "in the strictest sense of the word despotic,"* and that "he had never dreamt of applying the theory "or practice of the British Constitution to a country "of which the Constitution was suspended." He then argued that "it had been necessary that he should have "been known to have the means of acting as well as "of judging for himself without a perpetual control "by distant authorities;" and that he ought "through-"out the course of his administration to have enjoyed "the cordial and stedfast support of the authorities at "home." And his notions of the support to which he was entitled he presently explained to be that "if they "found his ordinances imperative they would give them "effect; if illegal, that they would make them law." But he complained that instead of finding his expectations fulfilled, from the commencement of his undertaking he had been "exposed to incessant criticism," in which the ministers had "tacitly acquiesced." And then he gave notice to all those whom his ordinance had banished that "no impediment existed to their "return, and that none could be interposed to it without "the adoption of measures alike repugnant to his sense "of justice and policy."

It would be unfair to impute to Lord Durham any intention to rekindle the flames of rebellion by this most ill-judged and unjustifiable announcement; but its immediate consequence was one which every one but himself perceived to be the natural one, that the exiles at once

* See his proclamation, 'Annual Register,' 1838, Appendix to Chronicle, 313.

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returned from Bermuda, and stirred up a second insurrection. This outbreak was again attempted to be supported by the friends of the insurgents in the United States, but it was speedily crushed by the vigour of Sir John Colborne, who had succeeded Lord Durham as Governor of the two provinces, and who, after he had defeated the rebels in the field, treated them with a most discreet lenity, pardoning a vast majority of his prisoners, and bringing to the scaffold only one or two of the French Canadians who were the most deeply implicated, and a very small number of the American sympathizers, who were tried by court-martial as pirates, and condemned with the tacit acquiescence of their own Government.

Not that the spirit of rebellion was as yet entirely extinguished; on the contrary, as late as the July of the following year Lord Melbourne pronounced the Lower Province still in a state of insurrection; and throughout the earlier part of the Session of Parliament Wellington was unremitting in his endeavours to arouse the ministers to a proper sense of the magnitude of our danger in that quarter, and to the necessity of making increased efforts to avert it. He looked with great alarm at the incursions which were still being made from time to time by the friends of the rebels in the United States, where "the sympathizers had formed "themselves into an organized body;" declaring that, "although such a system of private war was not un-"known in the deserts of Central Asia, or among the "barbarous tribes of Africa, it had never before been "practised by a nation supposed to be civilized." He complained that in spite of the friendly language of the President, these outrages were not repressed by the authorities of the United States; and, drawing a parallel between the conduct of the American Govern-

ment with respect to Canada, and the line which it had adopted in Texas, where its sympathy with the insurgents had gradually led it to assist the discontented Texians with an armed force to achieve their final separation from Mexico, he avowed his apprehension that if our Government did not take more active steps "to maintain our sovereignty in Canada, we should find "that province treated pretty much in the way in which "Texas had been already treated." He again entreated the ministers "to reflect that there could be no such thing "as a little war for a great nation like this; that great "interests were involved; and that it was necessary "to conduct their operations on a large scale if they "meant to bring them to such a termination as was "consistent with the dignity of their Sovereign and the "honour of the British Government."

At a subsequent period he repeated his warnings, drawing a striking picture of the war still going on on the frontier of Canada and the United States, which he described as one "of the greatest horror, misery, "and outrage; persons very appropriately designated "as brigands coming over in sledges, crossing the "country, and destroying the houses, taking the lives, "and plundering the property of the inhabitants who "lay in their path." And he insisted that if the Government did not adopt stronger measures "to "grant protection to the lives and property of the "Queen's loyal subjects in those provinces, and if Par-"liament would not vote the forces necessary to give "that protection on the frontiers, we ought to abandon "the provinces altogether." He contended also that the events of which he complained had arisen solely from the neglect shown by the ministers to his advice to send "a large army and a large fleet to the St. Lawrence

"on the first intelligence of the insurrection." He was well aware, he said, that there were persons in this country desirous to abandon those colonies. His own opinion was that not only our interests, but also our honour required us to preserve them. Nor did he ever swerve from that opinion by which all his future conduct on the subject was dictated.

One of the most important recommendations contained in the report which Lord Durham had presented suggested the union of the two provinces; and early in May Lord Melbourne brought down to Parliament a royal message recommending the consideration of measures framed with that view; and shortly afterwards resolutions in accordance with the spirit of the message were moved in the House of Commons, though that which promised an union of the two provinces was subsequently postponed, and a Bill to continue for three years more the powers given to the Governor by the Act of the preceding year was alone proceeded with. Owing partly to ministerial difficulties which will be mentioned presently it was near the end of July before the Bill proposed by the Government came before the House of Lords, when after Lord Normanby, who had lately succeeded Lord Glenelg as the Colonial Secretary, had stated its principal provisions, and Lord Brougham had vehemently attacked the Government for the whole of their conduct with respect both to Canada in general, and to the Bill before the House, Wellington with great force, though at no great length, expressed his sentiments on the whole subject, speaking cautiously with regard to the principle of the union between the two provinces, because "it seemed to be wished for by the "Legislature of one of the provinces intended to be "united, and was probably desired by that of the other

"also," but unhesitatingly with regard to the time at which the measure had been first proposed by the ministers, because "his opinion was that before Parliament could effect what was called a settlement of the "affairs of Upper and Lower Canada, it must first "establish peace and security within those provinces. "And this had not been done when the Queen's message came down, and had not been done when he "was speaking; for Lower Canada was still, as admitted "by Lord Melbourne, in a state of rebellion. Nor "could the Queen at that moment give protection to "her loyal subjects in that province." Till the royal authority was fully established there he maintained that it was impossible to make laws for the government of the country; and the reason why that authority was not yet established he found in the conduct of the Home Government, which "had never set about its operations "in that country with a view so to establish the Queen's "authority as if they intended to carry their measures "into execution. They had not (as he had often urged "them to do) advised the Queen to declare her intention to maintain her sovereignty and authority within "the province; and they had attempted to carry on "their operations there with a reduced peace establishment, the consequence of which was that neither "neighbouring powers nor the world at large believed "that they were in earnest or that they were likely to "be successful." To their present Bill he was willing to consent, and he even pressed Lord Brougham to withdraw amendments of which he had given notice; thinking it better that it should be left solely to the responsibility of the ministers whose task it would be to carry it into execution.

The fact of both our army and navy being on what

he called a reduced peace establishment was undeniable. The Ministry was so weak in every department, and so little respected by any party in the House of Commons, that it had been forced to court a low popularity and the support of a section of extreme opinions in that House by cutting down the military expenditure till, as Wellington now told them, "the army was now "more than ten thousand men under its proper number "even for the home service; and yet there was not "only this war in America, but another was being "carried on in Asia; and in both quarters with a want "of energy wholly unworthy of the resources of this "country, if properly drawn forth and applied with "wisdom and vigour."

To the end of his life the Duke made the same complaint; never with success, partly because of the cry for economy which no Ministry was strong enough to resist; partly because the wars in which we were engaged were distant, and distance softened even the horrors of our disasters in Affghanistan; and partly because many of his warnings had reference to the unprotected state of our own coasts; and as all agreed in looking upon them as unassailable, successive Governments made their resolution to overlook this part of his advice a plea for disregarding the whole of it. But when, shortly after his death, we were engaged in war in Europe, then the deficiencies of our warlike establishments forced themselves with agonizing force on the attention of the whole country, and vast expense was incurred in raising them to a point below which they never ought to have been suffered to descend; and now* also, great as have been the augmentations of our forces of every description since our rupture

* In June, 1859.

with Russia, the breaking out of war in Italy has re-awakened our apprehensions, and given a fresh spur to the zeal for the defence of the country which, however honourable to the volunteers whom it calls forth, would not have needed to be excited at all had not the disregard of the counsels of our great General involved us for a time in real danger.

Nor was his anxiety confined to his own branch of the service; on the contrary, he showed himself equally solicitous for the efficiency of the navy, uniting cordially with the members of the naval profession in the House of Lords in their denunciations of the unwise reductions which the Whig Ministry had made in that force which, as the especial bulwark of the nation, bore a higher place than even its army in the national regard; and contrasting its existing feeble condition with that in which he had left it on quitting office in 1830, when, as he truly boasted, "it was fully equal to the performance "of all the services required of it."

The next year the Bill for the union of the Canadian provinces was brought in, and Wellington again pronounced his fears that it was a premature measure, in which opinion he was supported by both the former Governors, Lord Gosford and Lord Seaton,* though the latter, whose experience of the provinces was the most recent, while he declared that he believed that every intelligent person in Canada shared his apprehensions, nevertheless expressed his belief that "to defer the union "would be more dangerous still, since it was impossible "to continue to suspend the Constitution of the Lower "Province, and perilous in the extreme to suffer the "agitation on the subject to continue." Lord Durham, though he declared that "he considered Wellington on

* Sir John Colborne had lately been created Lord Seaton.

"all the great interests and topics connected with this "great question as great an authority as could be listened "to either in or out of Parliament," pressed earnestly for its immediate adoption, which indeed was only a part of his own scheme, since he himself advocated an union of all our provinces in North America.

The Duke on his part was far from undervaluing Lord Durham's authority, but he maintained that "the time "was not come to make such a settlement with safety, "because we had not yet got the better of the temper "that had occasioned the insurrection, nor of the desire "to encourage it in the United States." He referred again to the desire that some persons entertained to get rid of these provinces altogether, hinting his belief that the present measure obtained some support from this inclination of theirs; and with a more just appreciation of "the resources and power of these colonies," he asserted his own opinion in contradiction to theirs, that "this country would sustain a heavy loss if they were "to be separated from it;" arguing further that if we should lose the Canadas "we must necessarily lose all "our dominions in North America;" and therefore he "implored the House and the Government not "to adopt this arrangement unless they were quite "certain (which he was sure they could not be) "that it would work for the good government of "these colonies; and unless they had ascertained "first what would be the real working of the sys-"tem they were about to establish." Next to the present unquiet state of the Lower Province, his own doubts were founded principally on the fact that "looking to the varied character of the two provinces "and of their inhabitants, to the great differences of "religious belief that prevailed amongst them, and to

"other differences of every description, they must be "considered as having in point of fact no one common "interest whatever except the navigation of the St. "Lawrence." Referring to the recent "settlement by "negotiations of the subject of the navigation of the "Meuse and the Rhine, in which most of the Con- "tinental States had an interest," he argued that in a similar way it would be perfectly easy to arrange the mutual rights of Upper and Lower Canada to the navigation of the St. Lawrence, and that "if the "Government only gave Upper Canada a good and "secure communication with its mouth, and the means "of enjoying the commerce of that river, they would "not only secure the prosperity of that province, but "would preserve it for ever in its union with this "country; while so long as we held the province of "Upper Canada there need be little fear of any separa- "tion from the Lower Province."

Lord Seaton in a despatch of the preceding year had said "that the British population in Canada earnestly "desired the union, and that those of French extraction "were less adverse to it than formerly;" but the Duke doubted "whether the real opinion of the Legislature "of Upper Canada, of that Legislature which had "enabled Sir Francis Head to put down the insurrection "there, had been obtained," and asserted that the chief agitation which had recently been disturbing the province was for "responsible local government, rather "than for this project of the union." He blamed the Ministry very severely for the encouragement which they had given to the cry for this principle of responsible local government by the appointment of persons to prominent situations in the Canadas who had distinguished themselves by their advocacy of it, though

he asserted that it was not only his own opinion, but theirs also, as proved by despatches which had been sent out from the Colonial Office to the Governor-General that "local responsible government and the Sovereignty "of Great Britain were completely incompatible." He urged with great force that by this Bill for an union of the two provinces a Legislature was to be formed for them "composed of members of three or four nations, "differing in language and religion," and declared it was impossible to expect harmony in such a body, while dissensions in it would lead to a recurrence of similar dangers to those in which the provinces had been recently plunged. A repetition of those dangers might entail the loss of these colonies, and he should deeply lament not only the injury, but "the disgrace of "losing them." He therefore resolutely opposed the present enactment of the Bill, though thinking it a matter to be decided mainly on the responsibility of the Government he scarcely wished to prevail. It was read a second time, and in committee he succeeded in carrying an amendment to postpone the operation of the Act for fifteen months; but even this success did not remove his objections to the measure, and when it passed the third reading he recorded them in an elaborate protest which besides recapitulating the arguments which he had advanced in his last speeches, carried his opposition further than they had done, placing it as it did on permanent grounds by affirming that "the "territory contained in the two provinces is too exten-"sive to be conveniently governed by one administration "and legislature."

It cannot be denied that his auguries of evil from the union of the Canadas have been falsified by the event, that since that event the provinces have enjoyed great

tranquillity, and have increased in prosperity to an extent scarcely equalled even by the most fortunate of our other colonies. Something may perhaps be owing to the freedom which has been granted to their trade since the passing of the Bill, a freedom which no one anticipated when this Act to which the Duke so strongly objected was passed. Much also is undoubtedly due to the eminent wisdom of some, and more especially of the last* of those to whom the Government of the united provinces has been entrusted. And on the whole certainly the Duke, who derived his knowledge of the colonies from report, cannot be blamed for having participated in the apprehensions which, as we have seen, were so fully shared by men like Lord Gosford and Lord Seaton, who (especially the latter) had formed his opinions after a longer acquaintance with Canada than had fallen to the lot of perhaps any Englishman who had ever been employed in that country.†

* Lord Elgin; who since his return from Canada has been appointed the British plenipotentiary in China, the duties of which arduous mission he has discharged with the same energy, prudence, and success which characterized his Canadian Administration.

† Lord Seaton had been Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Canada for nearly ten years when the first insurrection broke out.

CHAPTER LVI.

Weakness of the Government — Their indifference to the interests of the Church—Wellington maintains the principles of the Reform Bill—Supports the Corn Laws—The Ministry resign after the debate on the Jamaica Bill — The Bedchamber question—They resume their offices — Riots at Birmingham—Irish Municipal Corporation Bill—Banquet to Wellington at Dover.

BUT while these discussions on Canada were proceeding, the weakness of the Government in every department was daily becoming more conspicuous; and the assaults made on it in the House of Commons by the Radical section as well as by the members on the Conservative side of the House became more frequent and more formidable. Still in the House of Peers, the Duke supported them far oftener than he opposed them, aiding them to resist a series of resolutions proposed by Lord Brougham for the entire suppression of the slave trade, and the immediate abolition of the system of slave apprenticeship in the West Indian Islands, which had been established when the abolition of slavery was carried, and pointing out by his own experience acquired when representing this country at the Congresses of Vienna and Verona the absolute impossibility of prevailing on France, Spain, and the United States to

declare the trade in slaves piracy. Not that he had in the least relaxed in his detestation of the traffic in his fellow-creatures, which he had so energetically displayed on those occasions. On the contrary, he again and again expressed his earnest desire to put an end to it; and, in opposition to Lord Brougham, highly praised a recent Order in Council which had enabled the cultivators of British Guiana to import hired labourers from countries belonging to the East India Company; believing such an importation the foundation of a system which ought to be encouraged, even at a great expense; and drawing up a long series of practical suggestions for obtaining such labourers from Bengal, the value of which was at once cordially acknowledged by the Ministry.

On one subject, on the other hand, he freely censured the Government, "charging them with a departure from "that ancient policy of the country which for so many "years had been to protect, maintain, and encourage "the Church Establishments in the United Kingdom." Lord Melbourne had not been ashamed to describe one of the measures which he recommended to the adoption of Parliament as "a heavy blow and great discourage-"ment" to the Protestant Church in Ireland; and both in that country and in Scotland Wellington now accused him of neglecting his duty, in omitting to take proper steps for the support of religion; while at the same time, since the Prime Minister had attributed his difficulties in Ireland to the refusal of the Conservatives to consent to the appropriation clause, he declared his resolution under all circumstances to persist in that refusal, in which it will soon be seen that the ministers acquiesced.

On another subject also he gave them a more formal opposition, successfully resisting a ministerial Bill which

was introduced into the House of Lords by Lord Lansdowne, for relaxing those provisions of the Reform Bill which required the punctual payment of rates and taxes from electors; contending, with an argument which is especially worthy of repetition at the present moment, that all such relaxation was in fact a reduction of the amount of qualification; and asserting his own conviction that "the amount of qualification ought not to be "further diminished, since if it were to be diminished, "a worse description of electors would be the inevitable "consequence." Such a measure he truly declared would be "an approach to democracy," and he repeated the warning which had already been addressed to the Peers by one of his followers that such measures, when once adopted, however injurious they were found to be when carried into operation, were nevertheless irrevocable. In a similar spirit he in the next year applauded the Prime Minister for opposing all further extension of the suffrage, expressing his entire concurrence with the opinion which Lord Melbourne had delivered, "that "such extension would be inconsistent with the best "interests of the country." And though Lord Melbourne would probably not repeat that sentiment now that his former colleagues (not, it must be confessed, without the concurrence of their opponents) are threatening the kingdom with such an extension of the suffrage as no one who pretended to the name of a statesman dreamt of twenty years ago, we may feel sure that the Duke would still adhere to it as firmly as ever; since the majority of those whom it is proposed to enfranchise will be labouring artisans, men who even had they the inclination would be wholly unable to find leisure to acquire sufficient knowledge to enable them to exercise the privilege intended for them with benefit to the

country; while it may be argued with equal certainty that those who cannot give good reasons for their vote will probably vote for reasons which they are ashamed to give at all; namely, from corrupt ones. The almost unprecedented number of petitions presented since the last election proves that corruption is already spread to a great extent among the lower classes of voters. And it seems too obvious to require argument that the greater the number of poor voters is, the greater will be the number of those to whom a bribe will be the greatest of all inducements.

Wellington also expressed his entire agreement with the sentiments which the Prime Minister had expressed upon "the subject of the ballot," which he pronounced "an obnoxious and un-English measure;" and the suffering of which to be an open question in the Cabinet he "deeply regretted." And he took occasion at the same time to express his great disapproval of the system of allowing any questions of importance to be so treated, admitting that "he had himself been in office when "there were such questions," but affirming also that "he had never been able to consider them as anything "but a symptom of weakness on the part of those who "were carrying on the service of their Sovereign, a "symptom that they were not acting together, that "they did not agree amongst themselves, and that there "was a division also among their supporters. That so "important a question as the ballot should be left in "such a state he regarded as a circumstance most likely "to prove disastrous to the Government, and eventually "to the country."

The principle of this condemnation of open questions is undeniable; and the increasing number of them is, as Wellington argued, a manifest proof of the weakness

of the Cabinet which sanctions such a division of opinion in its members. His own Administration in 1828 was not at first wholly free from them; and since that time the Government over which Peel presided from 1841 to 1846 is the only one which has been able to dispense with them. The increasing weakness of the Government ever since the passing of the Reform Bill, which the Duke was the first to foresee, and which as yet has proved the most unfortunate consequence of that enactment, is gradually augmenting their number, and leading to a passive policy in each succeeding Administration, which often seems contented to acquiesce in almost as many divisions among the members as among the supporters of the Government; so that there is reason to fear that it will be long before the country is again blessed with an Administration decided enough in all its convictions to mark out for itself a clear and decided system of action, and sufficiently resolute in itself and firm in the confidence of the people at large to press its system on the Parliament with the vigour which can only result from unanimity.

Wellington also supported the Government on a subject on which, though he ultimately altered his line of conduct, he never changed his opinion to the end of his life, namely, the Corn Laws; joining the ministers in their resistance to a motion made by Lord Brougham for an inquiry into the operation of these laws at the bar of the House, which he truly pronounced to be unprecedented. But his principal objection was not to the manner in which Lord Brougham proposed to proceed, but to the object which he avowedly had in view, of procuring a relaxation or the entire abolition of the existing law. A fitter opportunity will occur hereafter for considering the merits of the question; but it is worth remarking that

on this the first occasion that the principle of the Law of 1829 was openly attacked, the arguments brought forward by Lord Brougham against it, and those adduced by the Duke in its favour, were precisely the same as those which were advanced on either side till the termination of the controversy in 1846: Lord Brougham contending that the law as it existed caused rather than prevented fluctuation of price; that by so doing it injured the fair trader, and encouraged illegitimate and pernicious speculation; that in the event of a bad harvest at home it hindered us from enjoying the benefit of a productive season in other regions, and that it caused the exclusion of our manufactures from countries which had nothing but corn to offer in return; while Wellington argued that the mere fact of agriculture having hitherto been protected for a long period was in itself a reason for "proceeding with great cau-"tion in any alteration which could interfere with an "interest which extends over such a vast portion of the "country, and affects all classes of her Majesty's sub-"jects," while "any mistake on such a subject would "involve the country in the greatest difficulties." And he also avowed his own belief that "agriculture could "not yet do without protection; and that therefore a "protective policy was essential to the prosperity of the "country." He affirmed that the existing law "had "effected all the purposes for which it had been framed; "that it had increased our own cultivation of corn, and "especially the growth of corn in Ireland and the trade "in corn between the two islands." And in opposition to Lord Brougham's assertion that it had caused great fluctuations in its price, "he declared that he could "prove that those fluctuations here had been far less "than those which had occurred during the same time

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"in countries in which there was no restriction on the "importation of corn, and he claimed for the existing "Corn Law the credit of having brought the price of "corn as near steadiness as possible." He avowed his belief that "the produce of the country had of late years "been so greatly increased, particularly in the valuable "article of wheat, that the annual produce of that grain "was now nearly equal to our greatest annual consump-"tion; and that the very lowest order of the people "subsisted mostly upon it, which was not the practice "in any other country in the world." He entreated his hearers "not to break down a system which had "carried cultivation to such a pitch." And finally, he reminded the House that "in the course of the period "during which the agricultural interests of the country "had enjoyed protection, not only had we brought to a "termination the great war against Napoleon, but we had "found our way out of the greatest misfortune which, "in his judgment, had occurred during the war, the "alteration in the currency. We had paid off one "hundred million of the national debt, and had reduced "the taxes to an enormous amount; and in his belief, "if we only persevered as we had hitherto done, we "should eventually find ourselves extricated from all the "difficulties of the moment by which we were then "surrounded."

But no forbearance or support of his could give strength or vitality to a Government wholly destitute of strength in itself; and though the ministers did two years longer contrive to hold their offices, they owed their protracted tenure of them to an occurrence in which they took a most unworthy advantage of the confiding inexperience of their youthful Sovereign. The Legislature of Jamaica, greatly discontented at some of the proceedings of the

British Parliament connected with the prison discipline of the colony, had passed a series of resolutions denouncing them, and refusing obedience to some of the Acts recently passed; and, as it showed no inclination to change its conduct, at the beginning of April, 1839, the ministers brought a Bill into the House of Commons to sanction a temporary suspension of the Constitution of the island. The Opposition, headed by Peel, who thought the time now sufficiently ripe for his recovery of office to warrant him in opposing so violent an enactment, resisted it unanimously; not indeed defending the conduct of the colony assailed, but denying that it had been such as to justify the infliction of so severe a penalty. After a protracted debate the ministers obtained a scanty majority of five votes in a House containing nearly six hundred members; rightly looking upon such a success as a virtual defeat they resigned their offices; and on the next day, the 7th May, 1839, made the usual announcement of their having done so to both Houses of Parliament.

The events of the next few days are fully set forth in the speech which the Duke addressed to the Peers after the lapse of a week, when the ministers who had thus resigned were reinstated in their places. The Queen at once sent for him, proposing to entrust to him the formation of a new Administration; but he (adhering to the opinion which in 1834 he had expressed to King William, that the greatly increased power which the Reform Bill had given to the House of Commons rendered it desirable that, whenever such a course should be practicable, the Prime Minister should be selected from the members of that House;) advised her Majesty rather to place Peel at the head of the new Government, promising to support him in any way that might appear

most desirable, and to serve his Sovereign either in office or out of office, though as he had now reached the ordinary term of human life, he should prefer not being encumbered with onerous official duties. To Peel therefore her Majesty now applied. He at once undertook the task proposed to him, and by the afternoon of the next day had prepared a list of those whom he designed for his principal colleagues, comprising the names of most of the eminent men who two years later took their places in his Cabinet, when a difficulty, which he at least had never foreseen, arose from the Queen's refusal to permit the necessary changes to be made in the female appointments of her household. In studied disregard of the usual and wise practice which selects the ladies of the royal retinue from those families of which the men take no very prominent part in politics, the late ministers had bestowed those appointments on their own nearest relatives; one lady especially being the wife of the nobleman whose eccentric career as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland had deservedly called forth the strongest animadversions of the Conservative party, and who subsequently, as Colonial Secretary, had been ostensibly responsible for the very Bill the division on which had led to the resignation of the late Ministry;* while another lady was the sister of the Secretary for Ireland, who had been the most ingenious and eloquent defender of the system lately pursued in the government of that country. It was manifestly impossible that the new Ministry could leave those posts which gave the holders of them the most constant access to their Sovereign in the hands of such near relations of their most

* At the beginning of February Lord Glenelg resigned the Colonial office, and was succeeded by Lord Normanby, who in the course of the summer exchanged that department for the Home office with Lord John Russell.

vehement political opponents. And moreover it had long been fully established as a general principle of State, that the chief appointments in the royal household were of a political nature. Not to mention the well-known events of 1812, when the question was fully discussed and this position completely established by the Whig leaders, Lord Grenville and Lord Grey; Lord Melbourne himself, just before the death of the late King, had enforced the dismissal of Lord Howe from the office of Chamberlain to Queen Adelaide for voting against a measure proposed by his Government.

Her present Majesty however was as yet too young to have become mistress of all such points of Constitutional practice; the accomplishments and graceful manners of the ladies in question had fascinated her mind and produced a strong attachment to their persons; and, not having apparently expected any necessity for parting with them, when Sir Robert Peel first mentioned the subject she was taken by surprise, and declared that in the female members of her household she would permit no change. Sir Robert suggested that she should consult the Duke, and the Duke was sent for. He had previously deliberated with Peel on the extent to which changes would be indispensable, and the chivalrous character of his loyalty is of itself a sufficient guarantee for the principles which influenced him in the decision to which he came. That decision he explained fully to the House of Lords. As far as he was personally concerned "he would have preferred "suffering any inconvenience whatever to taking any "step as to the Royal household which was not com-"patible with her Majesty's comfort. And he felt "that the new minister in every step which he took

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"ought to consult not only the honour of her Majesty's "Crown and her Royal state and dignity, but also her "social condition, her ease, her convenience, her com- "fort, in short everything which tended to the solace "and happiness of her life." But still such changes had been considered proper in the case of a Queen Consort, and he could not avoid taking into his consideration the vast difference between her position and that of a Queen Regnant. He saw plainly that "the possession "of the usual influence and control over the establish- "ment of the Royal household which had been exercised "by their predecessors in office was necessary to any "new ministers, in order to let the public see that they "possessed the entire confidence of her Majesty." And, looking upon it as necessary to their successful govern- ment, he also looked upon it as their positive duty to require it. This opinion he frankly stated to the Queen; she, dissatisfied with his judgment, sent for Lord John Russell, and after relating to him the proposal of Sir Robert Peel, and her own refusal to acquiesce in it,* inquired whether she was not justified in adhering to that refusal. With a disregard of every consideration but that of recovering his place, absolutely inconceiv- able in one who made pretensions to the character of a constitutional statesman, Lord John pronounced her Majesty fully justified, and with a correct appreci- ation of the motives likely to influence his colleagues, undertook that they would support her Majesty in her refusal.

They shared his motives, and approved his conduct, and raised a permanent monument to their own dis- interestedness by recording in a formal minute their

* See the speeches of Sir R. Peel, Lord J. Russell, and Lord Melbourne on the resumption of their offices by the Ministry.

united opinion that "though it was reasonable that the "great officers of the Court and situations in the house-"hold held by Members of Parliament should be in-"cluded in the political arrangements made in a change "in the Administration, a similar principle ought not "to be applied to the offices held by ladies." The description subsequently given of this celebrated memorandum by Lord Lyndhurst, bitter as it was, can hardly be said to have been overcharged. In his celebrated review of the proceedings of the Session he pronounced it "historically false, argumentatively false, logically "false, a paper of which the unconstitutional character "was only equalled by its folly, its extravagance, and "its absurdity." One purpose however the opinion so given fully answered; Peel declined to form an Administration on the conditions proposed to him, and Lord Melbourne and his colleagues resumed their places to their own entire satisfaction. It remained a harder task to justify their conduct to Parliament, and even Lord Melbourne so greatly felt the difficulty of his undertaking that he somewhat lost his temper while defending himself from accusations which, as he said, he was aware had been brought against him, of undue desire for place, and tenacity of office, and of being actuated by motives of ambition or motives of avarice. And declared that he had in truth been influenced by no other feeling than a resolution "not to abandon his Sovereign "in a situation of difficulty and distress, when a demand "had been made on her with which he thought she "ought not to comply; inconsistent with her personal "honour, and calculated to render her domestic life "one constant scene of unhappiness and discomfort." The Duke, in reply, said that he too had been vilified by ungrounded reports (he forbore to add, as he might

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have done, that they had been spread by at least one near relation of the Prime Minister, who was afterwards forced with some discredit to himself to recant his assertions), that he certainly had been "surprised to find "himself, after fifty years of continued labour in the "service of his Sovereign and of his country, traduced "as having ill treated his most gracious Sovereign; "for no other reason that he knew of save that he "was going at his time of life to take upon himself "the trouble of sharing in the Government. But that "as throughout the whole period of his life he had been "exposed to evil report and good report, he had become "completely indifferent to the nature of reports, and "had gained this advantage over the noble Viscount "at the head of the Government, that he was able to "preserve his temper under them." With perfect respect to her Majesty, and at the same time to his own dignity of character, he maintained that the principles on which he had given advice to her Majesty "were "the correct principles to govern a case like that under "discussion." And in addition to the justification of himself and Peel on the general view of the principle and practice of the Constitution, he affirmed that "it "was impossible to believe that the Queen held no "political conversation with those ladies, and that "political influence was not exercised by them, par-"ticularly considering who the persons were who held "those situations;" adding that "the history of this "country afforded a number of instances in which "secret and improper influence had been exercised by "means of such conversations; that he had himself "while in office felt the inconvenience of an anomalous "influence exerted simply in conversations; and indeed, "that the country was at that moment suffering some

"inconvenience from the exercise of that very secret "influence."

I have related this event at perhaps more length than its intrinsic importance may seem to deserve, because there is scarcely any occurrence in the Duke's life which more thoroughly displays the independent spirit, and the lofty unservile tone of his loyalty to his Sovereign; showing that, deeply as it pervaded his whole character, it never led him to consult her momentary feelings in preference to her permanent interests and real dignity; nor to forget the frank sincerity which he thought as due to her as to himself. The matter itself has long ceased to be of importance, except as throwing a light on the real character and objects of the replaced ministers, since, to quote the words of the liberal historian of the period,* "in a few weeks the "noisiest and busiest of agitators and journalists on "the side of the Whigs were glad to drop all mention "of the bedchamber question. By that time her "Majesty's advisers had admitted that her Majesty's "position was untenable;" and since in private conversation Lord Melbourne, with singular disregard of his own character, admitted not only that the fault which Peel had committed was not so much in the demand which he had made, as in the manner in which he had made it; "not giving the Queen time to "come round;" but that his own motive in resuming office was not really to support his Sovereign "in "a situation of difficulty and distress," but to avoid "blighting the prospects of his own followers;" since "he counted up more than two hundred of his in-"timate acquaintance, or their families, who would

* Miss Martineau's 'History of England during the Thirty Years' Peace,' vol. ii., 401.

"have been half ruined and heartbroken at his going "out."*

A re-establishment in office procured in such a manner was not likely to add much strength to the Ministry; and the rest of the Session was being passed by them in a more inglorious manner than ever, some of their measures being totally defeated, and others amended at the pleasure of their opponents, when an event happened, which, from the way in which they conducted themselves under it, placed their incompetency and utter neglect of their duties in a very glaring light before the whole kingdom. There had lately been organized in Birmingham an association of very doubtful loyalty, which assumed the name of the National Convention; some of the members of which had been taken up on charges of sedition, and which now concocted a huge petition demanding the concession of several mischievous demands, which they called the "points "of the charter to which the people were entitled," and from this charter as they called it they also began to be known by the title of Chartists. They procured one of the members for Birmingham not only to present their petition to the House of Commons, but to move that a committee should be appointed to take it into special consideration; and when this unusual proposition was properly refused by a large majority the discontent of the Chartists in Birmingham broke out into open violence. A few days earlier they had committed formidable outrages, and, when some of their ringleaders were taken up and were committed to prison, had passed some furious resolutions not only denouncing the police as "a bloodthirsty and unconstitutional force," but declaring that the ministers who now patronized

* Hayward's Essays, vol. i., 264, 266.

its proceedings were the very same men "who, when "out of office, had sanctioned and taken part in the "meetings of the people, but who now that they shared "in the public plunder sought to keep the people in "social and political degradation."* And now that the House of Commons showed its concurrence with the ministers by refusing to pay any special attention to their petition, they broke out into the most furious excesses; plundering and burning the houses of those opposed to their political views, and increasing their violence every hour, till a strong force of regular troops, infantry, cavalry, and even artillery, was forced to be employed to save the town from entire destruction at the hands of a body of its own inhabitants.

The news of this fearful riot speedily reached the metropolis, where it caused the greatest disquietude and alarm in the breast of every one but the Prime Minister. He, when questioned by the lord-lieutenant of the county, professed himself utterly without information and without any clear opinion on the subject; confessed that he was ignorant of what had been done by the rioters or by the authorities; and that he had no more knowledge on the subject than that which was derived from the newspapers; added that he "believed the reports of "the damage done were exaggerated;" and even accused Wellington himself of "violent exaggeration." Such a charge brought against himself, coupled with such shameful and shameless indifference, provoked Wellington to make the most indignant speech which he had ever addressed to his brother Peers. He avowed that "he had heard "Lord Melbourne's confession of ignorance with astonish-"ment. That was not the way in which the country

* 'Annual Register,' 1839, Chronicle, p. 103.

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"ought to be governed." He plainly charged the ministers with being themselves the cause of the disturbances which they thus disregarded. He declared that the magistrates of Birmingham had neglected their duty, and that they had done so because they had been appointed not in the usual way by the Lord Chancellor, but by the Home Secretary; hinting also not obscurely that they had been selected by him on the recommendation of a party in the town of extreme political opinions. And this charge was fully borne out by a statement made by Lord Warwick, the lord-lieutenant of the county, that some of those recently appointed were the very men who had been most active in the formation of the association which had instigated the riots; and that others were even Chartist delegates. The consequence had been that outrages had been committed in Birmingham such as Wellington declared that he had never seen perpetrated in a town taken by storm; "houses had been gutted, the whole of the "property which they contained had been taken out "of them, placed in the streets, and then set fire to. "And yet the Noble Lord at the head of the Govern-"ment when appealed to knew nothing of the matter."

Lord Lansdowne in vain came to the support of the Prime Minister, pronouncing it to be premature as yet to form any opinion on the matter, and declaring that the ministers would have been "almost criminal if they "had acted in a hurry" in an affair of such moment. But his defence only called the Duke up again, who showed undeniably that the ministers had at an early hour had quite sufficient information of the turbulent spirit displayed in the town to have rendered an active Government alive to the necessity of procuring minute and immediate intelligence; and that there was at all

events abundant proof "that the magistrates who did "not let the troops interfere till after houses in the "town had been burnt and property destroyed in the "manner which he had described were highly culpable." And from a statement that Lord Fitzwilliam, a violent supporter of the Ministry, had put forth as if it were an excuse for his friends, that similar outrages had occurred in Birmingham before, he drew the more legitimate inference that the very fact of "that town being liable "to such misfortunes was an additional reason why "the ministers, on the first information which they "received of the disturbances which occurred a few "days before, should have taken the hint, and should "have been careful that the magistracy of the town "did all they could to preserve the peace."

The feeling of the country went wholly with him in his condemnation of the supineness of the Ministry, and the weight of his censures on them for their misconduct ruffled the usually passive temper of the Prime Minister so greatly that, unable to retort upon him, he tried to turn the tables by attacking Lord Warwick, the lord-lieutenant of the county, for not at once repairing to Birmingham on the first intelligence of the disturbances. Wellington successfully defended his friend, showing that the fault lay not in the lord-lieutenant, who was ready to perform his duty, but in the Government who made no communication to him; and reproved the causeless violence of language and demeanour which the minister had exhibited, with a dignity and effect that for some time rendered that nobleman more cautious.

But Lord Melbourne's patience again and again gave way when the Duke supported Lord Brougham in his objections to the Bill on the subject of municipal corporations in Ireland; and when Wellington resisted the

measures which the Government introduced with respect to the conduct of the Portuguese on the subject of the slave trade, not because he had in the least abated his zeal for the suppression of that iniquitous traffic, in which cause he boasted with truth that "there was no "person living who had written more than he, or who "had negotiated with one-tenth of the zeal that he "himself had done;" but because he maintained that an Act of Parliament was an improper mode of proceeding in an affair which ought rather to be the subject of diplomatic negotiation, since the Portuguese could not in honour submit to an Act of our Parliament, nor could we recede from it when once passed; so that the consequence of such a proceeding must be to place the two countries in a position of antagonism to each other which would probably lead to actual war. Nor was the Prime Minister contented on these occasions with stigmatizing his conduct and that of those who acted with him as "unjust and absurd," but he ventured also to impute to them the most unworthy motives and a desire to defeat by covert manœuvres measures which they did not venture to oppose openly; while on the subject of the slave trade one of the followers of the minister did not scruple to charge the Duke with having "de- "serted the Government, and turned his back on them "and on the Crown;" and another had the boldness to attribute to him a complete ignorance of the subject under discussion. Wellington truly replied that a long life passed, as he trusted, with honour in the service of the Crown was a sufficient defence against some of these imputations, and the zeal which he had always shown for the suppression of the slave trade against others. But the Prime Minister's imputation of unworthy motives he repelled more directly, demanding that if Lord Melbourne had any fault to find with his

conduct or with that of his friends "he should bring his "charges openly and fairly;" asserting that his object in proposing or supporting amendments to the different Bills brought in by the ministers "was to render them "such that Parliament by passing them might really "hope to attain the object which its framers professed "to have in view;" averring that "this was a worthy "object;" and protesting that "he and his party were "influenced by as fair, as honourable, and as upright "motives as could possibly actuate the Prime Minister "himself, or the most respected of his colleagues." But the speech the most damaging to the ministers, if not the most effective which he ever delivered, was one which he made in support of Lord Lyndhurst's commentary on their proceedings, as showing their entire incapacity for governing the country. Lord Lyndhurst's exposure of their incompetency in every department had been so irresistible that Lord Melbourne, unable to answer it, had recourse to the most acrimonious personalities, reviling his critic as one hopelessly destitute of character and credit, and pronouncing it "impossible for him to conciliate the slightest degree "of confidence to himself or to those who would have "to administer the Government if it should have the "misfortune to be placed in his hands."

Wellington as usual came to the assistance of his friend the more zealously that there was no one whose abilities and high political disinterestedness he held in more deserved estimation; and his defence of him was most triumphant. On one point only did he admit the correctness of the Prime Minister's assertions, agreeing (with a delicate irony of reference to the events of the preceding spring) that "when the Noble Viscount stated "that there was no chance of Lord Lyndhurst and "his friends, among whom he presumed that he himself

"was included, having it again in their power to carry "on the Administration of the country, he was speaking "on a subject of which he had proved himself the best "possible judge; and he himself therefore considered "that matter now entirely settled." But he assured the Prime Minister that "all that he desired, and all "that he had desired for some years past," was not to have a share in the Administration for himself, but to see anything in the country that deserved to be called a Government at all; "to see the country "governed. He wished that he could say that he had "seen it 'governed' at all for some years past, and "he hoped now that the Noble Viscount would turn "over a new leaf, and 'govern' the country a little "better than he had done heretofore." As one of Lord Lyndhurst's principal topics of complaint had been the slovenly manner in which the Government Bills had been prepared, and the way in which they had been brought forward, withdrawn, reframed, reintroduced, and again postponed, or again withdrawn, Lord Melbourne had replied that it was a mistake to suppose that the principal business of Parliament was to pass new laws and to frame new enactments. But the Duke now implied his complete agreement on this subject with his friend and former colleague by the recommendation which he tendered to the minister to pursue a wholly different course with the Government Bills from that which had hitherto been witnessed. Not that this was the only reason why "he desired to see 'a Government' in the "country. He desired it also because he was anxious "to see our colonies settled and governed; because he "wished to see the interior of this country settled and "governed as it ought to be governed, and because "he desired to see all our establishments fixed and

"protected in that form and state in which they were to "remain." He proceeded to justify his own conduct in every measure of importance which had been brought forward during the session, showing how he had supported the ministers in their measures respecting Canada, and that, though he was now charged with having turned his back upon them on that subject, he had never done so till "they turned their backs upon "themselves, by taking no care that the Governor-"General whom they sent out should carry into "execution the Act under which he had been appointed "in the way intended by Parliament." Even then he had forborne to object to many things well calculated to provoke objection, "because he had always entertained a "strong disinclination to any sort of proceeding which "might appear personal, and was always unwilling to "raise a dispute upon matters which were bygone." In a similar spirit, in spite of the opposition of some of his own personal friends, and, of what weighed more with him, a most injudicious and violent speech from the new Colonial Secretary, who introduced the second ministerial Bill for the government of Jamaica, he had given it his support; aiding indeed to amend it in some particulars, but wishing in general to enable his Sovereign "to establish a real and effective Government in "the West Indian Islands."

This indeed was what he desired to see in every quarter, but it was also what, as he complained, the conduct of the ministers gave him no opportunity of seeing anywhere. He declared that if the "Noble Lord nomi-"nally at the head of the Colonial Department per-"formed his duty in an independent manner, keeping all "factions at a distance instead of allowing every faction "in this country to interfere with the business of the

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"Government in relation to the West Indian colonies;
"those possessions ought to be, and were calculated to be
"of the greatest advantage to this nation. But that in
"consequence of the system pursued of late years there
"were no societies in the whole world in such a state
"of disorganization, disorder, and anarchy. From the
"same cause the same lamentable state of things was to
"be seen in Canada and Newfoundland; nor till the
"Government put an end to the interference of faction in
"the affairs of those colonies, and acted independently
"of it, was it possible to hope for the restoration of
"tranquillity." Even in the case of the Bill respecting the slave trade and Portugal, on which he had opposed the Administration, "he had pointed out to the Government
"a mode by which they might have secured their object,
"and by which the objections which he had stated
"might have been obviated;" and he maintained "that
"his arguments remained unanswered, and indeed could
"not be answered, being founded upon treaties between
"this and other nations which he himself had quoted
"and laid before the House." He affirmed therefore that
"there were sufficient grounds afforded by the colonial
"and foreign policy of the Government to enable Parliament to come to the conclusion that the ministers
"were not equal to the performance of the important
"duties which had devolved upon them." He then turned to their domestic policy, showing that they had so mismanaged the revenue of the country that it had already fallen far short of the expenses, and yet that they were proposing still further reductions in that revenue, and making no provision for some of the most obvious and ordinary necessities of the State. And proceeding to what weighed even more heavily on his own mind, the disturbed state of this country, he abso-

lutely denied the assertions of the Prime Minister that it arose "from any opposition which had been given "in that House to any measures brought forward for "the redress of grievances," for in fact "he did not "know of a single measure which could be so described "that had been rejected;" and he rather attributed it to "the unnoticed and unpunished combinations "which had been allowed by the Government to exist "for many years, whether as political unions, or trade "unions, or other combinations clearly illegal amongst "workmen, which had gone so far in some parts of the "country, particularly in the north, as to threaten "destruction to the trade and credit of the manufac-"turers, and to bring the country into the state in "which it was then to be seen. For he had inquired a "great deal into the subject of Chartism, and he be-"lieved that the Chartists were nothing more nor less "than persons combined together for the purpose of "driving other workmen from their work, and for the "purpose of destroying machinery and buildings, and "of interfering with the capital of the employers, thus "striking at the very root of employment, and at the "chief means of the sustenance of the people; striking "at the foundation of the manufactures and the com-"merce of the country, and of all its prosperity. And "all this was owing to the remissness of the Government "in not noticing the proceedings of these combinations, "in not carrying the laws into execution in the case "even of those who had been tried, convicted, and "sentenced to punishment; and to their unfortunate "selection of magistrates in several boroughs from "persons known to be implicated in the proceedings of "these associations." He noticed also their impolitic reduction of all the military establishments of the

country, declaring "his firm conviction that in the "disturbed districts there was not half the force re- "quired;" and he argued that these circumstances also afforded a full justification for all the censures levelled by Lord Lyndhurst at the Ministry and at their recent proceedings and general character. It is plain that these strictures were well founded. The Ministry had resigned because they had not the confidence of Parliament; and certainly neither the manner in which they recovered their offices, nor the use they had since made of their authority, nor the state of the kingdom at home or abroad, were calculated to conciliate to them that confidence in any greater degree; and the greater part of the evils under which the kingdom laboured was traceable directly to their own proceedings.

Meanwhile the disinterested and pure patriotism of Wellington's own conduct was becoming universally appreciated; and Parliament had scarcely been prorogued when a superb banquet was given in his honour as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports at Dover, the most important of the towns which form that ancient corporation. The guests were not confined to one political party; indeed the toast of the day, the health of the Duke himself, was proposed by Lord Brougham, whose opinions were generally greatly at variance with his, who, on the question of the slave trade, had during the past session been very strongly opposed to him, but who now repaired to Dover to show, in his own eloquent words, "that no difference of opinion upon subjects however "important; no long course of opposition however con- "tracted upon public principles, were able so far to stifle "the natural feelings of the heart, so far to obscure the "reason as to prevent Englishmen from feeling, as they "ought, boundless gratitude for boundless merit."

CHAPTER LVII.

Riots at Newport—Marriage of the Queen—Wellington's anxiety for Religion —Affairs of India—His praise of Sir Robert Stopford's conduct at Acre—He supports the Ministry about China—Praises Captain Elliott—Objects to the public sale of Parliamentary Papers—Ministers are defeated in the House of Commons—Dissolution of Parliament—They are again defeated, and resign.

THE winter had scarcely begun when a fresh outbreak, more formidable than even that at Birmingham, occurred at Newport, in Monmouthshire, where a man of the name of Frost (who had been a linendraper till Lord John Russell, in defiance of a strong remonstrance addressed to him by those who knew the man, and the extreme violence of his political opinions and conduct, made him a magistrate) collected a body of Chartists to the number of several thousands, armed with guns, pikes, and weapons of various kinds, which had been prepared for some time, and led them against the town, in the hope of making himself master of it. He had reckoned on being able easily to defeat the small body of military stationed there; and had formed a plan of then uniting with the disaffected party in Birmingham, and exciting a general insurrection in the north of England. Fortunately however the mayor, Mr. Phillips, a man of admirable prudence and resolution, obtained timely information of the intended rising; and the officers in

command of the troops, which were only half a company of the 45th regiment, were men worthy of their noble profession. They skilfully turned the principal inn in the town into a stronghold, in which they received with slight loss and from which they returned with far more severe effect the fire of their assailants. The ringleaders proved cowards, and, after a very brief conflict, thirty soldiers and a small body of special constables put the whole body of rioters to flight. Frost and his principal associates were seized, convicted of high treason, and condemned to death, but, by a somewhat doubtful exercise of clemency, had that punishment commuted for transportation. The affair was lamented in the Queen's Speech at the commencement of the next session, and provoked severe comments in the House of Commons, but was scarcely noticed in the Upper House of Parliament, and is only mentioned here as a corroborative proof of the soundness of the Duke's opinion, that the weakness of the Administration was fraught with danger to the internal tranquillity of the country. Still however he forbore, as far as he could possibly think it consistent with his duty to do so, from offering them any formal opposition. His feeling at this time was rather that, considering the events of the past session, the time was not quite arrived when the Queen could be expected to acquiesce cheerfully in a change; and that, while such was the case, it was his duty to abstain from any steps which could have a tendency to increase or exasperate the dissensions between the two great political parties, but rather to strengthen the Government, so as to make it more able to resist the open or secret seditions of the avowed enemies of the Constitution.* Accordingly, during the greater part of the two ensuing sessions he took but

* See Sir C. Napier's Life, ii., 77.

a slight share in discussions on domestic policy, directing his attention rather to our affairs in the East, which had assumed a complexion, especially in India (in which country he had never ceased to feel the warmest interest), which powerfully called for the most dispassionate attention of Parliament.

In the debates which took place both on the domestic and foreign policy of the Cabinet he gave it not only his support, but cordial praise whenever he could; and yet so perverse was their mismanagement that they compelled him to something like an appearance of opposition on the very occasion where the most complete unanimity was most desirable. At the commencement of the session of 1840 the Queen announced to Parliament, as she had already announced to the Privy Council, her intended marriage with Prince Albert of Saxe Coburg and Gotha; but the address which the ministers had prepared in answer to this communication studiously avoided all recognition of the fact that the Prince was a Protestant. For its silence on this point, Lord Melbourne made the almost childish excuse that the fact was notorious; but Wellington, who believed that silence to have been caused by a fear of offending O'Connell and the Roman Catholic party in Ireland, considered that in this suppression of all mention of the religion of the intended husband of his Sovereign, a principle was involved of too great importance for him to acquiesce in it; and moved and carried an amendment, by which the Address, in that clause in which it congratulated her Majesty on an event likely to prove (and which happily has proved) a source of such happiness to herself and to the nation, should combine its felicitations with the assertion that the object of the royal choice was a Protestant. He observed with truth, "that the public had a right to

"something more than the mere name of the Prince "whom her Majesty was about to espouse;" that his religion was "a subject on which the public mind was "very anxious;" and he argued that the very notoriety of the fact that the Prince was, as by law he must be, a Protestant, showed that there was some concealed and sinister motive for withholding the express statement that he was such. He considered that he himself was peculiarly bound to object to such a statement being suppressed, since the fact of his having been the minister who had carried the measures for the removal of civil disabilities from Protestant Dissenters and from Roman Catholics, made it the more incumbent on him to show "that he had never intended, as Parliament had never "intended otherwise than that this should continue to "be a Protestant state."

Nor was this the only occasion on which he showed himself most solicitous for the religion and morality of the country. He condemned in the most pointed terms the conduct of the Prime Minister in presenting to the Queen a person of the name of Owen, the founder of an infidel sect, to which he gave the name of Socialists; maintained that the sect itself was an illegal association, and that it was the duty of the Legislature and of the Government to discountenance its adherents in every possible way. And before the end of the session he warmly supported a Bill brought in by the Government for the re-arrangement of the revenues of the Bishoprics and cathedral chapters in the kingdom; declaring his dissent from a petition against it which he presented from his own University, and justifying his course in so doing by the assertion of an opinion which, he said, he had at all times entertained, "that it was essentially "necessary that additional measures should be adopted

"in this country for preaching the Word of God to the "people; and that, as a commission containing among "its members several of the most eminent prelates of "the Church had reported that the Church itself was "possessed of adequate resources, it was obvious that "those ought to be exhausted before the public was "called upon to supply others." He urged, moreover, that in sanctioning this application of the revenues in the possession of the Church, Parliament "would not "only be performing a duty incumbent upon it, but "would also be following the example of every other "nation in the world. It had been his lot," he said, "to live among idolaters, among persons of all creeds, "and of all religions; but he had never yet known of a "single instance in which public means were not pro- "vided sufficient to teach the people the religion of their "country. They might be false religions: he knew of "but one true one; but yet means were never wanting "to teach those false religions; and he hoped that Par- "liament would not have done with the subject until it "had found sufficient means for teaching the people of "England their duty to their Maker, and their duty to "one another founded on their duty to that Maker." And he expressed a further hope that "we should soon "be enabled to teach the Word of God to every indi- "vidual living under the protection of the British "Sovereign."

In thus asserting doctrines which do as much honour to his heart as to his head, he was only proclaiming his adherence to those maxims which had led him years before to take so active a part in the establishment of King's College, London. Others have made more parade of their zeal in the cause of education, but he is the best entitled to be looked upon as its friend who labours to

base it upon proper principles. And he very early formed the opinion that the only proper foundation for education was religion, saying with as much truth as point, that to give men education without religion "was only to make "them clever devils." In the history of such a man it is interesting to observe how age and reflection strengthened his first impression. And though his hope that we should soon teach the Word of God to every subject of our Sovereign is not yet fulfilled; and though in India especially our rulers still halt in their opinions, and still hesitate to impart to the natives the full blessing of Christian teaching, the terrible lesson which we have lately received of the dangers with which too great a respect for the oriental castes and oriental superstitions environ our temporal supremacy, can hardly be permanently lost upon us; and must surely in the end compel our observance of a wiser because a bolder and an honester policy; and teach us to recommend to the natives the religion which we ourselves practise, not indeed by corruption, and still less by intimidation, but by the honest means of setting the truth plainly before them, and trusting to the purity of our faith when clearly explained and understood to win for itself the victory over the various impurities of the Indian misbelief.

The chief portion of his attention however and of his parliamentary exertions, as has been already said, was devoted at this time to our policy in the East; and especially to the achievements of our troops in the Indian wars, which were again being renewed on an extensive scale. Indian affairs had a permanent attraction for him; and the glory which he had won himself on that field naturally made his opinion on them, and especially on the military part of them, sought for and listened to with peculiar deference. In 1826 it was by following

plans which he had drawn out that Sir Archibald Campbell had overthrown the Burmese. The long interval of peace which had elapsed since that event, and since the glorious capture of Bhurtpore by his old comrade Lord Combermere, had not abated his interest in those regions; and now when the exploits of the army of the Indus, which under the command of Sir John Keane had stormed Ghuznee, and had established our influence throughout Cabul, came under the consideration of Parliament; and when discussions arose also respecting the disturbance of our relations with China, no one took a more energetic share in those debates than Wellington. On the policy indeed which had dictated our enterprises in Cabul he considered it premature to pronounce an opinion; but nothing could surpass the cordiality with which he corroborated Lord Melbourne's statements of the brilliancy of the services performed by the troops, or with which he praised the ministers themselves for the completeness of their arrangements for the campaign.

Nor was his zeal for the honour of the British arms confined to his own branch of the service: on the contrary, he warmly supported those naval officers who complained of the injudicious reductions which had recently been effected in our navy; taking every opportunity of expressing his own "great respect for and entire confi-" dence in the officers of our navy." And when in 1841 the exploits of Sir Robert Stopford and our sailors on the coast of Syria were brought under the notice of Parliament, none of their own comrades exceeded him in the warmth of the panegyric which he bestowed on "the " capture of the fortress of St. Jean d'Acre, as one of the " greatest achievements of modern times; and almost " the only instance on record of a fort being taken by " ships." In this instance he combined his praises of

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the troops with an eulogy of the policy of the ministers themselves, as shown in the judicious energy with which they had interfered in the dispute between the Sultan and his formidable vassal; and had grappled with "the danger to all Europe occasioned by the state "of affairs which led to the treaty of Unkiar Skelessi;" the result of which had been "that those dangers had "been removed, and that the whole transaction had "ended in a satisfactory manner." And, though it was well known that France was greatly discontented at the course which we had taken, he fully acquitted the ministers of having given her any reason to complain of a want "of courtesy" on our part. At the same time he expressed his hope that France would soon see the propriety of acquiescing frankly and approvingly in the settlement of the affairs of the Levant which had been effected. Lord Brougham had attributed the discontent evinced by France to the intrigues of the Emperor of Russia, "whose most cherished aim was to create a cold-"ness between that country and England, because the "existence of an alliance between ourselves and the "French made it hopeless for him to turn his eyes upon "Constantinople." But Wellington, while he expressed his unabated anxiety for the preservation of a good understanding between France and England, and his firm conviction that the preservation of the peace of Europe greatly depended on France at all times possessing "that "weight in the councils of Europe to which her power, "her wealth, and her resources entitled her," vindicated the Emperor of Russia also, declaring that "he did not "see that that sovereign had gained any peculiar advan-"tage by agreeing to what had been done for the settle-"ment of the affairs of the Levant; that it was not to "be expected that he would give up the treaty of Unkiar

"Skelessi * unless he obtained other and adequate secu-
"rities for the navigation of the Black Sea; but that he
"had originally acted in good faith towards the Porte,
"and with perfect sincerity towards the other powers of
"Europe; having taken great pains to prevent the inva-
"sion of Syria by Mehemet Ali; but having had the
"representations which he made on the subject to this
"country and to all the great powers in Europe wholly
"neglected."

Some of the overzealous supporters of the Government had praised the Government at the expense of the Opposition, declaring that if Wellington and his party "had "been in office, the greatest fears would have been ex-"cited for the preservation of peace." But against this insinuation the Duke justified himself with some indignation, affirming that "no man whatever had done "half so much for the preservation of peace, and above "all, for the pacification and the maintenance of the "honour of France, as he himself." And this boast, the same which he had made in quitting office in 1830, was strictly true. In fact, it might be said of him, as it was said of an earlier statesman, that—

Peace when he spoke was ever on his tongue.

And those impetuous politicians and inconsiderate orators who are wont to think little of the responsibilities of provoking war, and to speak lightly of its miseries and horrors, may learn an useful lesson if they reflect that this great man who had not only seen more of war than

* The treaty of Unkiar Skelessi was concluded between Russia and the Porte in July, 1833: it confirmed the treaty of Adrianople made between the same parties in 1829; stipulated for an offensive and defensive alliance between them for eight years, by which Russia placed all her fleets and armies at the disposal of the Sultan, and in return obtained from the Sultan a secret article, undertaking to close the straits of the Dardanelles against all ships of war of any foreign power whatever.—See the treaty at length, Alison, 2nd series, c. xxxii., vol. v., p. 519.

any other man alive, but who had every personal reason to look upon it with complacency as the source of his own wealth and station and glory, never spoke of it but as the greatest of all evils, to be averted at every cost but that of honour.

So rigidly did he at this time adhere to the line of conduct which he had prescribed for himself of "being "of use to the ministers on every occasion in the best "way he could," that he also supported them vigorously in their resistance to a motion made by Lord Stanhope in condemnation of the hostilities which had been recently commenced against China; though, as he said, "he had "from the very beginning disapproved of the system on "which we were acting in China; though, at the time that "the trade with that country was thrown open by Par-"liament in 1833, he had moved amendments, having "for their object to leave the management of the com-"munications with the Chinese Government at Canton "in the hands of the East India Company:" and though very many, if not the whole of the difficulties which had since arisen, had been caused by the conduct of the ministry in having entirely neglected the advice contained in a paper which he, when in office in 1835, had submitted to his colleagues on the subject; in which he blamed "the attempt which had been made to force upon "the Chinese authorities at Canton an unaccustomed mode "of communication with an authority of whose power and "of whose nature they had no knowledge," (alluding to the commissioners appointed to superintend the trade of British subjects with China); and in which he recommended further, that, till the minds of the Chinese were tranquillized so as to allow the trade to take "its regular "peaceable course," a sufficient naval force should be kept by our Government in the Chinese waters. But on the

present occasion he left everything out of sight but the consideration that the insults which the Chinese had offered to her Majesty's superintendent, Captain Elliott, of the navy, "were such as had never before been in-"flicted upon any such person residing under the pro-"tection of a foreign Government." And he most successfully vindicated the conduct of the Ministry in sanctioning the continuance of the opium trade, which was the pretext put forward by the Chinese authorities for their insolence to our officers; showing that even at the time when Parliament deprived the East India Company of its monopoly, it was yet most anxious "that this "very trade in opium should be continued;" and that there was every reason to believe that the Chinese themselves were equally inclined to favour it. "He therefore "saw clearly that whatever had been the immediate cause "of the war" (on which as yet he had no information sufficient to pronounce any positive opinion), "it could "not have been the trade in opium." Of Captain Elliott's conduct he approved in almost every particular: that officer, he said, "had been placed from the first commence-"ment of his duties in a very unfortunate and very "difficult position." He praised him for his refusal, after a Chinese had been killed in an affray, to give up the Englishman to whom his death was imputed to be tried by the Chinese tribunals: he praised him for protecting Mr. Dent, an English merchant who was believed to have made a large fortune by his dealings in opium; declaring, in opposition to Lord Stanhope's opinion that Mr. Dent should have been given up, that he himself "should "have been ashamed of the name of Englishman if any "officer in her Majesty's service could have been found "capable of acting differently from Captain Elliott in "this affair;" and most especially did he praise him for

the moral courage and self-devotion, "such as few men "have ever had an opportunity of showing, and probably "fewer still would have shown," with which he took upon himself to prevail on the British merchants to give up the opium which the Chinese authorities demanded, and to promise that the British Government should pay its value, when he "had no authority under any Order in "Council to enable him to perform that service." He praised the Company "also who put an end to the trade "rather than risk the life of a British subject." Not that he thought the Ministry in every particular justifiable: to their neglect to carry into execution some of the measures which they originally proposed, he thought some of the violence to which our countrymen had been exposed was clearly ascribable; and, since the Act of Parliament which had been passed on the subject gave the Queen the power of regulating our trade in China by an Order in Council, he blamed them very severely for having omitted to issue such an order. He even hinted a suspicion that some of the evils which had taken place might have been avoided if we had had a large naval force at hand when the difficulties first arose. But his desire not to embarrass the Ministry at a critical moment led him to waive or to postpone all such considerations; and the support which he gave them on the question was as effective as it was generous. Nor would he oppose them on their Bill for the regulation of the Irish Corporations; though he entertained great and, as the event has proved, not ill-founded apprehensions that the corporations, in the manner in which they were to be elected, "were likely to be as exclusive in another sense as the "existing ones had been found to be;" he himself would greatly have preferred Lord Lyndhurst's proposal to extinguish them altogether, and he believed that such

a plan would have met with general approbation in Ireland; many of his party too, in their distrust of the Ministry wished him to support a motion which they made for the rejection of the Bill altogether: but the course which he pursued of agreeing to its second reading, and compelling the assent of the Government to amendments calculated to remove its most democratic and dangerous provisions, was clearly that most in accordance with the dignity and moderation of his own character, and also with his reputation as a statesman and with the interests of the country. For some enactment on the subject was admitted by all parties to be indispensable, and the only prospect of successfully carrying one lay in a compromise by which the Opposition should admit the principle of the Government Bill, and the Government in its turn should acquiesce, as it now did, in such alterations of it as should remove the chief objections to its details which were entertained by the Opposition.

One question of great interest which was abundantly and angrily discussed in both Houses of Parliament had no connection with the duration of the Ministry: being that of the privilege claimed by the House of Commons of not only publishing for the use of their own members, but also of selling to the public, accounts of their transactions and all their documents and papers, however the private character of individuals might be assailed in them. After the House of Commons had been for some time engaged in an unseemly conflict on the subject with the Court of Queen's Bench, the ministers brought in a Bill to enable the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker, as the organs of their respective Houses, to authorize all such publications for the future. When the Bill came before the House of Lords, the Duke delivered an opinion on the subject which is clearly that sanctioned by common sense and

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common justice; namely, that while it is indispensable for Parliament to have the power of printing for the use of their own members all such documents as those the criminating nature of which had occasioned the original difficulty, there could be no such necessity for those documents being sold to the public at large. Indeed it had never been done till the year 1835, when the House of Commons first passed a resolution permitting the sale of their papers: nor had any inconvenience ever been sustained through Parliament not having previously had the power which was claimed for it now; that power he was clear Parliament ought not to have. And the view which he took of the question was as usual a much larger one than that in which it was regarded by the vehement sticklers for parliamentary privilege. He "considered "it as it affected the public generally; and maintained "that the public was mainly interested in its being under-"stood that Parliament was not to be the one privileged "seller of libels against individuals." He considered it also as it might possibly affect the peace of this country and of Europe. He referred to the prosecution instituted by Napoleon against Peltier, and asked "whether it was "desirable that Parliament should have the right of pub-"lishing and selling libels on all the Sovereigns of all "foreign countries in Europe?" Ever on the watch for what he looked upon as the great end of all our foreign policy, Peace; he pressed upon his audience that "the "greatest political interest of this country was to remain "at peace and unity with all the nations of the world: "that that end was best to be secured by avoiding even "the cause of war, and of giving offence to any one; "especially by avoiding insulting the feelings of any So-"vereign at whom individuals might have taken offence, "and against whom they might seek to publish libels

"under sanction of Parliament." His opinion therefore was that neither as a matter of right nor as a matter of policy ought either House of Parliament to have the privilege "of becoming libellers by the authorized sale "of their papers;" in short, that while publication for the use of their own members was indispensable, sale to the public at large was unnecessary and unjustifiable. Certainly such a limitation of their privileges cannot really impair the power or the usefulness or the dignity of Parliament: while it is equally clear to all except those whose judgments are blinded by zeal for the body to which they belong, that it is imperatively demanded "by justice to the public in general."

In 1841 an affair became the subject of discussion in the House of Lords of no very great importance in itself, but strikingly illustrative of the unvarying candour of Wellington. The Bishop of Exeter had presented a petition, and had himself inveighed severely against an ordinance of Lord Sydenham, the new Governor-General of Canada, by which the Roman Catholic Seminary of St. Sulpice was incorporated, and the seigniory of the island of Montreal was confirmed to that institution. And the Duke had strongly supported the bishop's arguments, and had affirmed that the seminary "was not a legal body, "and possessed no legal property; and that by now "creating it a corporation a blow was struck at the "principles of the Reformation; and the Crown also was "deprived of its legal title to the estates thus vested in "this new corporation." But when the discussion on the subject was renewed a few days later he frankly confessed that he had been wholly mistaken. "That he had "forgotten what had taken place on this subject and on "similar subjects under Lord Liverpool's Administration, "though he himself had been a member of it, and a party

"to transactions which completely justified the Act now "under consideration." He said "he had concluded too "hastily that as he generally knew what was passing he "knew all about this." And he now therefore wholly retracted his objections to Lord Sydenham's ordinance, and thus gave his fellow Peers an example of candid confession of error not very often practised in either House of Parliament, and probably never in such frank and undisguised terms.

But his moderation and forbearance could not keep the ministers much longer in office. They were continually defeated in the House of Commons, and they began to show tokens of dissension among themselves; while the troubled state of India, where the incompetency of Lord Auckland the Governor-General had involved us in fearful difficulties in Cabul and Affghanistan, and the disordered state of our finances at home called loudly for their replacement by abler and firmer councillors. These considerations led Peel at the end of May 1841 to move a resolution expressing that they had not the confidence of the House of Commons, which in an unusually full House was carried by a majority of one. The defeated ministers appealed to the country by a dissolution, but the new Parliament proved far more distrustful of them than its predecessor; on its first opening at the end of August a similar motion was carried in a still fuller House by a majority of 91; and on this occasion it was accompanied by a corresponding vote in the House of Lords, proposed by Lord Ripon, who was supported by Wellington in an energetic speech, in which he went over many of the general charges to which the conduct of the Government had rendered it liable; exposing the disorder into which they had brought the finances of the country by a total want of management and foresight

which in his opinion was alone sufficient to justify Lord Ripon's motion. He also blamed very particularly the course which the ministers had pursued respecting the Corn Law. In the preceding May, when greatly perplexed by the continued inferiority of the revenue of the country to its expenses, the ministers had proposed to substitute a fixed tax of eight shillings a quarter on wheat for the existing sliding scale of duties: the proposal had been vigorously combated by the Conservatives, whom Lord Melbourne had endeavoured in vain to conciliate by declaring his continued adherence to the principle of protecting our native agriculture; defending the ministerial proposition on financial grounds, though not denying at the same time that "there were many reasons "and grounds which rendered the agitation and discussion "of this question liable to great objections and fraught "with considerable evil and danger."* In spite of this opinion, however, he had introduced expressions into the speech delivered by the Queen at the dissolution of the late Parliament, intimating that the Corn Law was one of the especial subjects on which her Majesty desired "to "ascertain the sense of the people." And the Royal Speech with which the present Parliament was opened had more expressly characterized it as "aggravating "the natural fluctuations of supply, embarrassing trade, "deranging the currency, and by its operation dimi-"nishing the comfort and increasing the privations of "the great body of the community." Wellington forbore to enter into the merit or demerit of the Corn Law itself on the present occasion; but he expressed the strongest disapprobation of the unusual conduct of the Government in thus "bringing questions of great importance before "Parliament not only in their principle but likewise in

* See Lord Melbourne's speech of May 3, 1841.

" their details." He declared that the language of the Royal Speech at the dissolution " was certainly calculated " to excite animosity in the country on the subject; and " that it gave him the greatest concern that the Prime " Minister should have permitted himself to advise her " Majesty to make this speech, and thus to invoke her " name in such a question; endeavouring to create an " impression in the country that those who were opposed " to the repeal or alteration of these laws were opposed " to her Majesty." He complained also that this had been done without any parliamentary inquiry into the operation of these laws having been previously instituted, or any information on the subject having been laid before Parliament; though it was not very long ago since the Prime Minister himself had been so favourable to the existing law that in his place in the House of Lords " he " had declared, and had appealed to God in support of " that declaration, that he thought the man must be mad " who should propose ever to take that law into consi- " deration " with any view to its alteration.

Of Lord Melbourne himself he spoke generally in terms of high respect. He said that " he had always considered " that the Noble Viscount had rendered the greatest pos- " sible service to her Majesty. He had reason to know " that her Majesty herself was of opinion that the Noble " Viscount had rendered her the greatest service, not only " as a public servant engaged in the conduct of affairs, " but in the assistance he had given her Majesty in " making her acquainted with the laws, the policy, and " system of government of this country." And he contended that this feeling of gratitude which her Majesty entertained towards her minister made it more " pecu- " liarly that minister's duty to watch over her and protect " her, and to refrain from embarking her name in this

"cause as had been done." Of himself and his own conduct he spoke very briefly, declaring that he had on several occasions thought it his duty to discourage the bringing forward of motions calculated to embarrass the ministers; and "that on several occasions he had gone "so far as to give them his support however much he "might have disapproved of some parts of their conduct." But he now thought it clear that "they did not possess "the confidence of the country sufficiently to enable them "to carry on the Government;" and he gave a hearty vote in favour of Lord Ripon's resolution. It was carried by a majority of more than seventy Peers, and Lord Melbourne and his colleagues resigned their offices.

CHAPTER LVIII.

By Wellington's advice the Queen makes Peel Prime Minister—Wellington succeeds Lord Hill as Commander-in-Chief—Revision of the Corn Law—Wellington's speech on the subject—Imposition of the Income Tax.

AGAIN her Majesty consulted the Duke, and again by his advice she entrusted the formation of the new Administration to Sir Robert Peel. This time that statesman had no difficulties to contend with in respect of the arrangements of the household, since the ladies comprising it at once resigned their posts. And in a few days he had completed the arrangements for a Ministry* which was acknowledged on all hands from the first to contain a very eminent amount of administrative talent; for which his own measures subsequently earned the further praise of conspicuous financial ability, and which for five years ruled this vast empire with a power and authority which had not been previously witnessed for a long time, and with the most universal success. Wellington

* The principal members of the new ministry were, the Duke of Wellington; First Lord of the Treasury, Sir R. Peel; Lord Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Goulburn; Secretaries of State, Sir James Graham, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Stanley; President of the Board of Control, Lord Ellenborough (who, when he went to India as Governor-General, was succeeded by Lord Fitzgerald and Vesci); First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Haddington; President of the Council, Lord Wharncliffe; Lord Privy Seal, Duke of Buckingham, who resigned at the beginning of 1842, and was succeeded by the Duke of Buccleuch.

himself became a member of the Cabinet, and undertook the task of leading the House of Lords; but occupied no ministerial office, feeling himself probably no longer equal to such laborious duties.

He was now upwards of seventy-two years of age, and he had been once or twice attacked by sudden fits of illness which had caused considerable anxiety and alarm to his friends. In the July of the following year, when illness rendered Lord Hill incapable of any longer discharging his duties at the Horse Guards, he did indeed at the express desire of his Sovereign resume his old post as Commander-in-Chief, but in that office the long experience and proved capacity of the Military Secretary, his old friend and aide-de-camp Lord Fitzroy Somerset,* rendered his labours so light that he was able to discharge them to the end of his existence.

The first session of the new Ministry passed easily to the Duke, as no subjects of any importance came before the House of Lords; indeed, the session itself did not last a month after the new ministers had taken their seats, and was only remarkable for the factious conduct of the late Ministry, who, though they had left the finances of the country in a state of such embarrassment that the deficiency for which the new Chancellor of the Exchequer had to provide fell but little short of two millions and a half of money, were unwilling to grant him the delay of a vacation to consider so important a matter; objecting to Peel's mode of meeting the present emergency by

* The present generation does not require to be told that after the death of the Duke, he became Lord Raglan, that he commanded the British army in the Crimea; led it to victory at Alma and at Inkermann; and fell a victim to the laborious discharge of his duties, dying in the British camp in June, 1855, lamented by the whole army whose admiration he had won by his brilliant gallantry, and on whose affection he had secured a still firmer hold by his manly sympathy in their almost unprecedented hardships and sufferings.

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funding a portion of the unfunded debt as a temporary measure; and demanding the instant promulgation of a scheme for the disentanglement of the country from the difficulties which they had been six years in creating for it. And this unreasonable demand was pressed by Lord Radnor and Lord Melbourne in the House of Lords with even more eagerness than it had been advanced in the House of Commons: Lord Radnor dilated on the distress which, as he asserted, prevailed throughout the country, and condemned the idea of proroguing Parliament till a searching inquiry had been instituted into that distress and into the Corn Laws as connected with it; and Lord Melbourne insisted that the season of the year and the consequently thin attendance of members of either House need be no bar to such an inquiry or to the instant introduction of necessary measures, as there could be no doubt but that if the Duke were to announce a motion affecting the Corn Laws that announcement would insure an ample attendance in both Houses.

Wellington declined to enter in the least degree at present into the merits of the Corn Law: but at the same time that he admitted that there was distress in the country, he contended that the fact that two million quarters of corn had recently been imported at a duty of one shilling proved that scarcity of food was not the cause of that distress; and since he thought, in spite of the contrary opinion which Lord Melbourne had expressed, that it would be impossible to secure such an attendance in Parliament as should render it possible for any immediate inquiry into the Corn Laws to be attended with any practical result, he was quite prepared to bear the responsibility of advising an early prorogation. And referring to the clamour for an early introduction of some new measure on the subject he

declared, not, one might fancy, without a covert allusion to the manner in which the late Ministry had announced measures without consideration, and had withdrawn them with equal precipitation, that "those who from their "situations were called upon to tender advice to her "Majesty should consider well before they gave it; that "he himself always did so. And that though the ques- "tion of the Corn Laws now stood in a different light "from that in which it stood in 1828, when he himself "had proposed the existing law, still they must now be "considered with reference not only to other questions "with which they were connected by different motions "made and discussed in the other House of Parliament, "but also in reference to treaties between this country and "other powers, and also to the treaties of other powers "with each other, and (combined with these) the general "relations by which they were connected with the whole "system of this country. It was a matter which should "not be taken up in a hurry, but one which must be "deliberately examined in all its bearings."

In spite of Lord Radnor's remonstrances Parliament was prorogued the first week in October; but the question of the Corn Laws obtained but little respite: it was one of the principal subjects of consideration to the Cabinet during the recess; and was the very first topic brought forward by the Opposition in the session of the next year. The existing scale of duties on the importation of corn, varying in some instances several shillings on account of the variation of a single shilling in the average price in our markets, rendered it liable to the charge made by its opponents that it was a jumping rather than a sliding scale. It appeared also that when that average price was low or moderate the duty payable was needlessly or indeed mischievously high, since it brought nothing into the

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treasury, and only contributed to throw odium and ridicule on the law itself which imposed so heavy a tax. For instance, when the average price of a quarter of wheat was under fifty-one shillings the duty on any importation was thirty-six shillings and eightpence a quarter; till the price reached sixty-six shillings the duty fell inversely as the price rose in the same proportion; but as the price rose to seventy-three shillings the duty by a succession of jumps fell to a single shilling; thus encouraging the importers to hold back corn till it reached the price of seventy-three shillings, and also to tamper with the averages so as to render the apparent price higher than the real one. And so effectually were the importers able to influence the price that, though for the last three years above two million quarters of foreign wheat had annually been introduced into the island, a very small proportion indeed had paid more than a shilling duty.

This consideration alone was sufficient to suggest the advisability of revising the scale. And it was justified by others of not less weight. In the first place it appeared that the sum which it seemed to fix as a properly remunerating price to the wheat grower was sixty-six shillings, and that that was about ten shillings too high. It seemed probable also that, from the rapid growth of our population, the necessity for a considerable importation of wheat would be continually increasing; and of course the more indispensable such an importation became to the subsistence of the nation the greater was the necessity that the taxation to which the article to be imported was liable should be placed on the soundest possible footing. Influenced by these and other reasons of almost equal cogency Peel framed a new scale, beginning with a duty of a pound when the price of wheat did not exceed fifty shillings, and lowering the tax almost exactly as the

price rose till, as in the existing scale when the price was seventy-three shillings, the duty became one shilling. With the exception of the Duke of Buckingham, who resigned the Privy Seal in preference to consenting to it, all his colleagues acquiesced in his proposal; and on the opening of the Parliamentary Session of 1842 the intention of the Cabinet to propose an alteration in the existing law was announced in a brief paragraph of the Queen's speech, which gave rise to immediate comment on the part of those who were favourable to, as well as those who were unfriendly to any change. Lord Melbourne, thinking of nothing but embarrassing the Administration, denounced the sliding-scale as "an absurdity not to be paralleled "even in 'Rabelais':" while Lord Fitzwilliam, on the other hand, though an equally ardent Whig, and though equally distrustful of the sliding scale, showed an eagerness to give the Government every support in his power; speaking with particular respect of Wellington as its "presid- "ing Genius." He looked upon him now he said, though invested with no office, "as a sort of Viceroy over the "Ministry," and, though he could not avoid giving utterance to some surprise at finding that "he whose particular "affection for the Corn Laws was well known now con- "curred with his colleagues in recommending an altera- "tion in them," expressed a hope that "he was about "to deal with them as he had formerly dealt with the "Catholic question, and to commence a second campaign "in legislation as important and as useful as those which "had made him so illustrious in another field of action."

The Duke's general prepossession in favour of a high duty on the importation of corn was no secret. In the previous year he had asserted that it was the duty of Parliament "to continue such a law till it had succeeded "in procuring the subsistence of the country from the

" produce of the country itself," and, arguing that they acted beneficially for every class of the community, since " this was the only country he had ever known in which " a poor man, if he had only industry and honesty, could " acquire independence and competence, he entreated his " hearers for the sake of the people in general, for the " sake of the lower orders of that people, not to lend " themselves in any way to any measure which might " discourage the cultivation of the country." These arguments were not all sound, since it was almost certain (as indeed he himself subsequently admitted) that the country could not now produce a sufficient quantity of grain for the subsistence of its population: but the propriety or impropriety of imposing a considerable duty on imported corn was not the question in dispute; for on the necessity of a protecting tax both parties with very few exceptions were agreed, and the only question between them was whether that protection was best afforded by a fixed or by a variable duty. On the present occasion the Duke declined either explaining his motives for approving of a modification of the existing law, or entering into any details of the measure which his colleagues had in contemplation. It was however very speedily introduced into the House of Commons by Peel, who in the elaborate and most perspicuous speech with which he introduced it expressed his continued adherence to the principle of protection as justified partly by the special burdens borne by the agriculturists, and partly by the interest of the nation generally, since it would be unwise and dangerous " to make this country permanently dependent on foreign " countries for any very considerable portion of its supply " of corn." All the attempts of the Opposition to prevent the progress of the Bill were vain: a motion made by Lord John Russell, designed to procure the substitution of

a fixed for a fluctuating duty was defeated by a majority of more than a hundred votes; and one brought forward by Mr. Villiers, the member for Wolverhampton, condemning the imposition of any duty whatever on articles of food, failed to find a hundred supporters, and was rejected by nearly four hundred opponents. The bill passed the Commons, and early in April was introduced into the House of Lords, where, on going into committee, Lord Melbourne reproduced the amendment which Lord John Russell had brought forward in the other House; and which here numbered Lord Brougham among its advocates, though he explained his sentiments to be that, though he preferred a fixed to a variable duty, he was on principle opposed to any tax whatever being placed on the food of the people.

Wellington, who had not spoken on the second reading of the Bill, now entered at some length into a defence both of its details and of its principles. He admitted that Lord Brougham's assertion that "the Corn Laws "pressed upon the food of the people might be abstract-"edly true;" but argued that that assertion "had no "connection with the present question, since scarcely "any one contemplated, certainly Lord Melbourne did "not contemplate, leaving the agriculture of the country "without protection; and the question before the House "was simply what was the best mode of giving that pro-"tection which appeared to be generally admitted both "in Parliament and in the country to be necessary." He fully allowed that "under the existing law great "frauds had been practised in taking the averages; and "that probably it was the scale of duties imposed by it "that had given occasion to these frauds." But he believed that the Bill now proposed would prevent the future commission of such frauds; and that when they

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were prevented a sliding scale in which the tax fluctuated with the fluctuations in the home price was the best adapted to an article of which the supply also varied with the seasons. He defended Peel's view that fifty-six shillings a quarter for wheat would be a remunerating price to the British farmers, by showing that while it was admitted that they had had nothing to complain of during the thirteen years that the present law had existed, that price had been about the average of what they had received throughout that period. And, with reference to Lord Melbourne's present abuse of the sliding scale, he showed first that it was not the novelty that that statesman seemed to suppose, since, though for a short time during the French war the importation of corn had been unrestricted, "there had been a corn law in this country "previously to the year 1794, and that law also de-"pended on a graduated scale of duties;" and secondly, he affirmed that the existing law had worked well, since under it "the price of corn had been as steady in this "country as in any other part of the world."

Passing over the proposal of a fixed duty he argued, and indeed proved by the admission of its advocates in the House of Commons, that it could not be maintained whenever the price of corn became high; that if, as Lord John Russell had proposed, "it were to be reduced by "degrees when the price came up to a certain rate," that would in effect be making it a sliding scale; while if it were to cease altogether in such an event, then it would present something like a recurrence to the law of 1815, "by which corn was protected by a prohibition till it "came to a certain price; but when it reached that price "the ports were opened." Moreover he reminded the House that during the existence of that law of 1815 the Government had been forced more than once to dispense

with it, and on their own responsibility "to allow "foreign corn to be brought into the market without "the payment of any duty." Such an interference of the executive power he conceived to be an evil, to guard against which was very important. And he maintained that a well-adjusted sliding scale did guard against it effectually, since "it executed itself, coming to nothing "as the price rose, so that the Government could have "no occasion to interfere."

Of the assertion that the Corn Laws embarrassed the commerce of the country he expressed his entire disbelief. He admitted that our manufactures were at the moment in a less flourishing state than formerly; but he contended that their embarrassment arose from the encouragement which the continuance of peace had enabled foreign countries to give to their own manufactures, and was wholly unconnected with any laws of this country. Nor did his zeal for the interests of the land prevent him from doing ample justice to the greatness and importance of our commerce and manufactures: on the contrary it was, he affirmed, the universal sense of that importance entertained by foreign countries, which "in "the course of the last war had seen the great and "noble exertions of this country, and the power and "resources which it exhibited on all occasions, which had "led those who contemplated those exertions, and those "who had been relieved or assisted by them to desire to "follow the example of such a nation, and to establish "and encourage among themselves a similar manufac-"turing and commercial system." But even with this desire on the part of foreign countries "the exports of "the produce of the looms and forges of this country "were so far from having been diminished by the Corn "Law that since its establishment in 1828 they had

" been nearly quadrupled." In that point of view therefore he thought it plain that the manufacturers could not complain of the operation of this law. That distress among many of them did exist he confessed and deplored; but he attributed it mainly to the increase of machinery which had recently taken place, which, though productive of great general advantage, could never fail to be accompanied with severe temporary pressure upon individuals.

He also disputed the doctrine that the existence of the present law had any injurious influence on the currency of the country. The advocates for the abolition of the sliding scale contended that, since under its operation the importation of corn was occasional, fluctuating, and uncertain, it was necessarily paid for in specie, but that if by the substitution of a fixed duty a regular trade in it were established with foreign countries, those from whom we received it would take our manufactures in exchange for it. In opposition to this theory Wellington maintained that under the existing law "foreign corn " was always in the course of being imported into this " country; so that there was a regular trade already " established:" and also that "it did not require the " transmission of any large sums of specie to foreign " countries." He admitted that of course money to some extent was sent abroad to pay for the corn imported, but " he affirmed that it was done by degrees," and he denied that it caused any such difficulty to the Bank as "to " afford any ground for opposition to the graduated scale."

Lastly, he alluded to "the views of those who desired " that we should depend solely upon our own supply of " provisions for the people of this country." He admitted that "with our population increasing every year both in " numbers and wealth, it was impossible to expect that

"we should at any period have our agriculture in such a "state as to enable us to rely upon it exclusively for the "supply of our wants. At present we required about "a million quarters annually, and it was probable that "the necessity for such a supply would go on increasing "to a still further extent;" but still he contended "that "our own cultivation of corn should be encouraged "as far as possible with a view to render us as in-"dependent as we could be of supplies from foreign "countries." Lord Melbourne had adduced as an argument that dependence on foreign supplies was not to be dreaded the fact that "Athens and Rome, the "two greatest republics of ancient times, were wholly "dependent upon them." But the Duke begged his hearers "not to look quite so far back: it was easy to "find examples more analogous to the question in the "recent situation of this country, since on their own "records they had an instance of one sovereign in "Europe levying a duty on the export of corn from "his dominions because he found that the price of "corn was high in this country." He reminded them also of the state in which "the great source of supply, "Poland," had so frequently been: and begged them to consider "that our supply of corn as far as foreign coun-"tries were concerned depended on the tranquillity of "the people residing upon two or three of the large "streams running into the Baltic. And that so recently "as the preceding year, when this country was in want "of a supply of corn, a similar want was felt at the same "time in different parts of Russia, and proclamations were "issued forbidding the export of any kind of grain from "the Russian dominions." He inferred therefore that it was a mistake "to imagine that we could at all times "have from all parts of the world all the corn that we

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"might require." And on these grounds he entreated Parliament "to continue to provide for the prosperity of the "agriculture of the country, and to maintain it in the "state in which it had been for the last fourteen years."

These latter arguments affected the maintenance of any restrictive duty whatever on corn rather than the question of which mode of taxation was preferable; and they, and others adduced in support of protection as a principle, will be more fitly noticed on a later occasion. But the preponderance of argument in favour of a sliding scale of taxation over a fixed duty seems very decided, and was never put more closely and forcibly than by the Duke on this occasion, when he showed by the admissions of the very advocates of a fixed duty that there might often be occasions on which it could not be maintained, but when it would require the despotic interposition of the Government to relieve the country from its pressure; while the sliding scale would execute itself, vanishing by its own operation the moment that the price of corn in the home market began or even threatened to render it oppressive.

From this belief in the wisdom of the Corn Law he likewise resisted a motion made by Lord Kinnaird for a committee to inquire into the distress which prevailed in the manufacturing districts; as he also opposed a more general motion of the same kind brought forward by Lord Brougham; because the avowed object of both those noble lords was to show that the distress of which they complained was attributable to the tax upon corn. As before, he admitted the existence of distress, and even announced that the Government had advised the issue of "a Queen's Letter to be read in every church in England, "calling on the benevolent and charitable to subscribe for "its relief." But even more than he trusted to the often

proved charity of his wealthier countrymen did he place confidence for the effectual and permanent relief of the nation in the policy of the Administration, and in the "measures of great importance and benefit" which they had already passed; or which were so far advanced that their passing might be considered secure. He instanced particularly the Bill for the regulation of the Customs, in which Peel, with enormous industry, and with a financial capacity unequalled since the time of Pitt, had remodelled the whole tariff in a manner "that would improve "commerce and trade to a vast extent;" and the imposition of the income tax, which "would restore the "finances of the country and place them on that basis "on which they ought always to stand." From these two measures combined "he anticipated the most happy "results not only to the commerce and trade, but to all "the great interests of the country." They would "extend our markets, and enable the British merchant to "bring into the market many articles which were formerly "prohibited; so that by these means considerable relief "would be afforded to the manufacturers and to the consumers generally." He announced further that "the "Government was engaged in negotiating treaties of "commerce with other countries; and also in promoting "the restoration of peace, which of itself would extend "our commerce with other nations." And regardless of the unpopularity which might accrue to him from the apparent cruelty of refusing inquiry into the causes of a distress which he did not deny, he refused to consent to the appointment of a committee for any such purpose, contending that it would in effect aggravate the distress by creating great excitement and discontent among the people, and by practically "throwing obstacles in the "way of fully legislating on those measures which the

"Government had introduced," and to which, as has been said, he looked for substantial and durable relief.

The session did not expire without the Opposition making one more effort for their favourite scheme of a fixed duty, which they now coupled with a proposed alteration of the duties on sugar and timber, setting up as it were a little tariff of their own to run against Peel's. The principal source to which Peel trusted for an immediate increase to the revenue was an income tax; which, according to his calculation, would not only meet the deficiency which the Whigs had bequeathed to him, but would also produce such a surplus as would alone enable him to afford to make the heavy reductions which he proposed in the other taxes; reductions which it was plain must at first cause a diminution of revenue, though he trusted that, by the impulse which they would give to trade and commerce through increased consumption, they would ultimately raise the revenue to a higher point than it had ever previously reached.

The income tax however was vehemently opposed by the late Ministry, and Lord Lansdowne and Lord Melbourne moved an amendment that the desired revenue would be better raised by an alteration in the duties on corn, sugar, and timber; though nothing could be clearer than that a large additional revenue could not be raised from corn without raising the price of that article to the poor, whose distress at other times they professed it to be their principal object to relieve. Without condescending to notice this inconsistency on the part of his antagonists the Duke disposed of their opposition in a few convincing words. As to corn he showed that the variations in the quantity of that article imported in different years rendered it impossible to reckon on a duty on it as productive of any certain amount of revenue; while "what the

"Government wanted was certainty." And with respect to sugar he adopted and enforced an argument which had already been urged by Lord Brougham, that, since sugar was the article which had the greatest connection with the slave trade, no alteration in the tax upon it ought to be made which would not have a tendency to diminish that horrid traffic; and he also contended that the engagements into which Government had entered with our own West Indian proprietors at the time of the abolition of slavery in those islands ought to prevent us from altering the existing system. The question of the timber duties he passed over, since it was manifest that no alteration in them could affect the revenue in any great degree. But he defended the income tax on its own merits also as an absolute necessity at the time. He reminded the House that the experiment of imposing an additional per-centage on the Customs, Excise, and Taxes had failed; so that there really was no other tax which could be devised which was certain to supply the deficiency in the revenue; and if, besides supplying that deficiency, it should, as seemed probable, leave a considerable overplus, he contended that that overplus would be most beneficially employed "in relieving the country from other "taxes which pressed heavily on its resources, and from "which it was desirable that it should be relieved in "order to benefit its commerce, its manufactures, and its "other interests. And in fact the Government did intend "to employ that overplus in that manner." He fully admitted the inconveniences of such a tax, inconveniences so great that "nothing but absolute necessity could have "induced the Ministry to propose such a tax." And he even expressed a hope that Parliament would not consent to continue it "one hour longer than it was absolutely "necessary." But he also avowed an expectation that

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the tax would work its own repeal, by improving the trade of the country through the repeal or modification of other taxes to such a degree that the revenue would soon become sufficiently productive without it.

Finally, he reminded his hearers of facts which might well have shamed the late ministers out of their opposition, showing convincingly that the necessity for such a tax had been produced by the state of affairs in which his colleagues and himself had found the country on their assumption of office. "He would not say we had been "at war, but we had been at something as like war, if it "were not war, as anything could well be. He himself "had certainly considered the measures which had been "carried into execution during the last few years as "measures of war: at all events it was plain that they "had entailed upon the country the expenses of war. "And we were now exactly in the situation of persons "who had incurred a great debt, and who were called "upon to pay the bill."

The measure proposed by the Government was passed by a large majority. The most formidable objection to it, that it taxed life incomes as heavily as those derived from permanent property, the Duke did not notice; probably from a persuasion that the tax would not be required at all for more than a very few years. In this he was in some degree mistaken, since it is not yet discontinued; though the period for its extinction is now fixed, and is drawing very near: but that it was absolutely necessary at the time, and that it has been productive of advantages greater even than its author anticipated no one will probably be found to deny: indeed the consent which Parliament has more than once given to its continuance beyond the time for which it was originally voted has been the strongest possible

admission of its necessity and of its beneficial effect. At the same time from its unexpected duration it may be hoped that future ministers, if ever it shall be found necessary to reimpose it, will have learnt that, since when once imposed it is not so easily got rid of, it becomes them to remove from it those defects which are admitted on all sides, and the neglect to remedy which hitherto has been the chief cause of the general clamour for the abolition of the tax.

CHAPTER LIX.

The Duke resumes the command of the army—Attacks on the Ministry by the Opposition—Retrieval of the Affghan disasters—The Duke's speeches on the war in India—His praise of Nott and Sale—His approval of Lord Ellenborough's policy, and defence of his proclamations—His disapproval of his recall.

IN July 1842, Lord Hill, who had held the command of the army for nearly fifteen years, was compelled by ill health to resign it; and, as has been already mentioned, the Duke resumed it as his natural situation. And some of his most interesting speeches in the next year may be looked upon as connected with his office as Commander-in-Chief, being made on the occasion of his moving the thanks of the House of Lords to the gallant troops who had asserted the honour of the British flag in China and had retrieved it in India. Yet even on subjects like these the leaders of the Opposition could not entirely restrain their ill humour, but diligently sought occasion for finding fault with the measures of the Government when they could; and, when they could discover no flaw in the acts themselves, for censuring the language in which those acts were spoken of.

The first attack was made by Lord Lansdowne, who brought an accusation against the Queen's speech, such

as of all others Wellington was least inclined to endure, charging it as he did, in the Duke's opinion, with falsehood in asserting that it was to "the increased exertions "which by the liberality of Parliament her Majesty had "been enabled to make" that the successful termination of the hostilities with China was owing; an assertion which its critic imputed to "an intense desire to say "something in favour of the income tax." He did not deny that the war had been successfully concluded, but he claimed the credit for Lord Auckland, the late Governor-General, attributing that success principally to that nobleman's judicious suggestions; and he excited the Duke's displeasure further by an attempt to disparage the close of the Affghan war through an insinuation that the Governor-General had not shown himself sufficiently solicitous for the recovery of the prisoners who had fallen into the enemy's hands. The Duke's reply was irresistible in his defence of the Speech as regarded its accurate truth; and the contrast which he drew between the conduct of the existing and that of the preceding Government must have made his antagonist repent of having provoked it. He pointed out that the proper, in fact the invariable course with one single exception, when the country was engaged in war was for the ministers "to come to Parliament with an esti-"mate of the force necessary for carrying it on, the "expense thereof, and the means for finding the money "to pay that expense." The only exception to that usual and proper course had been afforded by the conduct of the Ministry of which Lord Lansdowne had been a member, which "had carried on war all over the "world with a peace establishment." But in spite of their mischievous example, the existing Government on their entering into office had at once "recommended

" her Majesty to call on Parliament for a grant of ad-
" ditional forces and of an adequate sum of money; and
" before they had been a week in office they had de-
" spatched orders to India to prepare to send reinforce-
" ments to China, and they had also sent reinforcements
" from England of troops and of ships as soon as they
" could be prepared." And referring to his own individual conduct, he also reminded the Noble Marquess and the House that, though he was in Opposition when the question was first discussed in that House, he had been the only person who defended the ministers from the imputation of having rushed into war unnecessarily; but that he had affirmed that "it was a just and necessary
" war, and that our cause was a just one." That the credit of the success obtained against the Chinese was due to Lord Auckland he utterly denied, declaring that such an assertion could only be made by one who "forgot the
" operations at Chusan; the withdrawal of the troops
" from the northern part of the Chinese seas; the going
" down to Canton, and the many months lost at the
" commencement of the campaign." He did not deny that the late Government had formed "a very fine
" scheme, an admirable plan, in short a variety of mea-
" sures which, if adopted, would probably have pre-
" vented the recent squabbles; but the misfortune was
" that not one of the measures proposed was ever
" adopted; the execution of them was what was for-
" gotten. He himself had been in office for a short
" time after the first difficulties had arisen, and he had
" left a memorandum recommending measures to be
" adopted." But he complained that the late Ministry had taken no care to execute either his measures or their own; and to their neglect all the troubles which had arisen, and had lasted so long, were wholly ascribable.

But more than even for the credit of the Ministry at home was he anxious for the reputation of his absent friend the Governor-General of India; nor was a more honourable tribute ever paid by one man to another than he took this occasion of paying to the judgment and energy with which Lord Ellenborough had stemmed the tide of disaster and retrieved our credit in that country. Lord Lansdowne had allowed himself to insinuate a disapproval of some of the orders issued by the Governor-General for the movement of the troops, and the Duke in reply, after claiming to speak on such a subject with some authority, since "he had seen some-"thing of Governors-General, and knew some little of "military affairs and military difficulties," declared "that he was prepared on any day to justify every "order for movement, whether one way or the other, "that the Governor-General had given from the mo-"ment in which he took on him to administer the affairs "of India to that time." He avowed that as a general rule, in the absence of any servant of the Crown, "he "should be ready to defend him;" but he affirmed that the Governor-General was not indebted to his absence for this his advocacy of his conduct, but to the fact "that it had not been possible for any one to do more;" and also that whatever deficiencies his critics here fancied they could detect in his plans arose "from the "state of the preparations which he found on his arrival "in India; and from the neglect of those who had pre-"ceded him."

The question of Lord Ellenborough's merits was however soon brought before the House more formally when the Duke proposed a vote of thanks to him and to the Indian army, after having first carried a similar vote to the army and navy employed in China. On this

latter occasion he carefully avoided any political allusions which could give rise to controversy, contenting himself with setting before the Peers those facts only which were necessary to enable them to form a judgment of the services rendered by the fleet and army. In a singularly lucid narrative he set before them the evasions of the Chinese Commissioners who had been authorized to treat with us, the violations of the agreements into which they had entered, and their unprovoked attacks upon our ships, which had at last compelled us to commence hostilities against them. He related the capture of Canton, and of Ningpo, and our advance against Nánkin, which at last brought the Chinese to submission; and he also set before his hearers the exceeding difficulty of all the operations of the war, enhanced as they were by "the complete ignorance which "we and all mankind were in with respect to the com-"munications of the country." The mere account of their achievements was in itself high praise of the commanders of both fleet and army. But more even than he praised their warlike skill did he extol the patriotic good feeling which had led the general and admiral to co-operate together on all occasions with the most perfect cordiality, and pronouncing, with an entire absence of professional jealousy, that their exploits "had "shown what a fleet and army can do when united and "acting cordially in support of each other."

Nor did he confine his panegyric to the chief commanders. On the contrary, he took occasion to dwell with marked and unusual eulogy on the "activity and "energy of the subalterns," and even "of the petty "officers and seamen," whose indefatigable zeal had largely contributed to the success obtained. To one who had formerly laboured so diligently himself to

instil principles of moderation and justice into his own soldiers, it must also have been a very peculiar source of satisfaction to be able to announce to his hearers that while achieving their great successes, the troops in both fleet and army "had displayed uncommon proofs of "discipline and good order, avoiding that great temp- "tation in war, the use of spirituous liquors, and treat- "ing their enemies on all occasions with the utmost "humanity, so that he understood the feeling in China "had been that 'these barbarians were their best friends, "and could not be looked on as enemies.'"

But when he came a week later to propose a similar vote to the Governor-General of India and the army engaged in Affghanistan, he had a somewhat more delicate and difficult task, since he was aware that the Opposition did not look on Lord Ellenborough's share in the exploits performed in that country with a very friendly eye; partly no doubt because of the contrast which they afforded to the proceedings of their own partisan, his predecessor; and partly too on account of two proclamations which Lord Ellenborough had issued after the success of his operations, one of which was very commonly criticised for its general style, while the other was supposed, in speaking of "disasters unpa- "ralleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which "they originated," to contain a reflection on the policy of that predecessor which offended both against ordinary usage, and against good taste. The Duke however, though fully prepared to defend his friend on these points, passed them by altogether on the present occasion, and, while dwelling with great fervour and with great impressiveness on the vast exploits of our army, so entirely avoided all party reflections that Lord Auckland himself seconded his motion; and, with the excep-

tion of an insignificant attempt made by Lord Clanricarde to disparage the Governor-General, as having shown himself indifferent to the recovery of the prisoners in the hands of the Affghans, not a voice was raised in opposition to it.

In recommending it to the House, the Duke employed a simplicity which, in speaking of such momentous events, momentous whether as disasters or successes, is the truest and most impressive eloquence. Without indulging in the very slightest insinuations against any one, he pointed out how at the beginning of 1841 "the "whole country on the north-western frontier of British "India had been in a state of insurrection and dis-"turbance." He briefly enumerated the difficulties which lay in the way of all the generals, and especially of Sale, to hinder them from executing the orders which they had received; he gave a rapid but vivid sketch of the constant treachery of the Affghans, of the murders of Burnes and Macnaghten; of the long and terrible contest which ensued between the British troops and the insurgents; and of the manner in which, worn out with the protracted and ceaseless struggle, our men gradually lost their strength of body, their spirit, and their habits of subordination and discipline. He narrated in language so calm and moderate as to betray no token of his sense of the weakness of the conduct which he was recording, how the leaders of our army still continued to negotiate with their faithless and now triumphant foes; how this weakness, which could not escape the notice of the troops, increased the discouragement, and, as an inevitable consequence, the insubordination and disorder of the army; till it became little better than "a mob with arms in their hands;" how the helplessness of this mob in its forced retreat was

rendered more helpless still by the number of women, and invalids weaker than women, to whom it was an apparent escort; how neither women nor invalids had any proper conveyance, nor sufficient provisions, nor scarcely sufficient clothing, though the weather was more than usually inclement; and how their faithless foes who had guaranteed their safety followed them, cutting off the stragglers and those who fell behind from exhaustion, and firing on the small body which still continued compact, though its numbers were daily lessening under their unparalleled hardships. He told his hearers, in a statement of awful plainness, how "this distressing "march continued till every one belonging to the army "had either been killed or taken prisoner except one, "who succeeded in reaching Jellalabad." He told them with what skill and courage Sale and Nott had established themselves in that town and in Candahar; though he forbore to allude to the order which they received from Lord Auckland to abandon those strongholds, which happily for their country and their own fame they coincided in disobeying; he told also how from the instant that the new Governor-General landed in India the most energetic efforts were made to relieve those intrepid generals. He then set before the Peers in the clearest light the vast difficulties which were interposed to their relief, arising from the want of means of conveyance for stores and ammunition, till it seemed at one time that all the efforts made for that object would be frustrated; as indeed they would have been had not Sale, who, with a skill and constancy unequalled in war (till the still more glorious defence of Lucknow by Inglis threw all achievements of that kind in the history of the whole world into the shade), had held Jellalabad through all the winter months, at last becoming the

assailant, "attacked the enemy's camp, gained a complete "victory and relieved himself."

Nor did the Duke recount with less animation the exploits of Nott, who had twice defeated the enemy in front of Candahar, and, having taken Ghuznee, had marched steadily and irresistibly forward till he joined his comrades of the army at Cabul. And, knowing well from his own Peninsular experience how arduous is the task of arranging the communications between detached bodies of troops, and of directing all those details of management on which, petty as they may appear at a distance, the efficiency and often the existence of an army depends, he gave a full meed of praise to the untiring energy and solid judgment displayed by Lord Ellenborough, clearly intimating at the same time his approval of the wisdom of the decision to which the Governor-General had come, to withdraw the troops finally from Affghanistan, "and not to embark again "in the reconquest of the country." Wellington himself had always shown his disposition to value honour and character above everything, and he now deliberately pronounced his opinion that when the safe withdrawal of our garrisons and the recovery of the prisoners from the hands of the Affghans was effected, "all had been "done which could be required for the honour and "character of the country." Those objects had been secured; in little more than six months from the day on which the Governor-General first landed in India, "everything that the most sanguine mind could have "formed an expectation of for remedying the evils "and misfortunes which had occurred in the previous "December and January" had been achieved. And the Duke now confidently proposed to Parliament to give its public thanks to the great men who had

planned and executed measures of such salutary success.

As it has been already stated the vote was agreed to unanimously. But the Opposition were not to be turned by it from their meditated attack on Lord Ellenborough's proclamations. Their own fault when in office had been, as the Duke had told them a short time before, not that they did not form judicious plans and express wise sentiments, but that they never carried them out in action; and now, adhering to their preference of words to deeds, they thought that however wise, energetic, and successful the actions of Lord Ellenborough had been, still if they could impeach the taste of some of his expressions, they should effect something towards reducing him to their own level in the general estimation. Accordingly a few days after the vote of thanks had been passed Lord Clanricarde brought under the notice of the House two proclamations of Lord Ellenborough, one of which was addressed to his own army, and which, while congratulating the troops on their triumphs, and announcing the future policy of the Government, mentioned "the errors in which "the recent disasters now retrieved had originated;" and the other, directed "to the princes and chiefs and "people of India," spoke of the restoration of the gates of the temple of Somnauth in language which its critics affirmed to countenance the maintenance of the gross superstitions of India in a manner unbecoming a great magistrate of a Christian nation. On this ground and on that of the impropriety "of publicly commenting "and reflecting upon the previous acts and policy of "Government," which it was maintained had been done in the mention of "errors," Lord Clanricarde proposed that the House of Lords should record "the regret and

" disapprobation " with which they had seen these proclamations.

Wellington with the most cordial zeal at once stood forth in defence of his friend. The public announcement of the future intentions of the Indian Government with respect to Affghanistan he not only maintained to have been " reasonable and right," but he also proved them to have been, made in conformity with former precedents, one of which was even furnished in the case of this same Affghan war by Lord Auckland himself. While as to the principal matter contained in the first proclamation, he contended that the Governor-General " could not well have done otherwise than have " stated publicly to his allies and to the world the " situation in which he found himself placed, and in " which he was likely for the future to stand." It was quite true, as had been alleged, that he had himself given advice to the Governor-General on many subjects connected with his Government; but it was an entire mistake to suppose, according to a rumour which had reached Lord Clanricarde, that even the language of the first proclamation was partly taken from one of his private letters. Though however he was wholly unconnected with it, " he must say that he entirely concurred " in the propriety of every word contained in it." And with regard to the language in which Lord Ellenborough was accused of having reflected on his predecessor, while it was self-evident that such terrible disasters as our armies had suffered could not have been incurred without the commission of great errors, the Duke showed by an enumeration of them that they had been chiefly military errors, and as such imputable rather to General Elphinstone than to Lord Auckland. In his former speech Wellington had made great excuse for that officer, explaining

with truth that his feeble state of health, and an accident which he subsequently met with, had rendered him incapable of the exertion necessary in one who filled so arduous a post at such a time; but still he now pointed out that the manner in which he had employed the army, his neglect of the shortest and easiest line of communication, and indeed his omission to keep up any proper communication at all with the troops stationed at Cabul, argued on his part a want of "common experience and common "reflection in his profession," to which the disasters which befell the army were chiefly if not solely ascribable. It was evident, he argued, that Lord Ellenborough had never intended to reflect on Lord Auckland as the cause of these fatal errors; nor as blamable for another which caused no slight mischief, by which "a large share of military responsibility had at this "time been imposed upon a gentleman who was no "officer at all, but the civil resident at the court of a "foreign sovereign," Sir William Macnaghten. It was perfectly true; the Duke said, that such a "Resi-"dent must have certain relations with the military "movements of the troops," but it was preposterous and unprecedented in the highest degree to give him any power to interfere authoritatively with them, and to throw upon him any share of military responsibility. And he spoke with particular emphasis on this point because he himself had commanded troops under somewhat similar circumstances, while at Paris, for instance, "having not one minister only to deal with but a whole "corps of ministers; and so far was he from his being "under their orders that they were under his; and it "was he who was responsible, and not they, for the "safety of the troops under his command."

The second proclamation or letter to the princes and

people of India on the subject of the gates of Somnauth, he considered scarcely entitled to the notice which it had excited. It was, he said, merely "a song of "triumph." And as for the encouragement which it was alleged had been given to idolatry in India by the restoration of the gates, and by the terms in which that restoration was spoken of, he pronounced that whatever name had been given to the building to which they originally belonged and to which they were now restored, "it was not a heathen temple at all, and though "no one knew exactly what it was, it had probably "never been a temple." At all events, even if it had been one at first, it was not one now, "nor were there "any persons now remaining in Guzerat, where the "building was, of the idolatrous class by whom it had "been originally erected." Many ages before the gates had been carried away to form the chief ornament of the tomb of Mahmoud at Ghuznee; now that we had twice taken that fortress the restoration of them to their original position was a fitting token and trophy of our success; and as such it was hailed by the Indian army, composed as that army was of Christians, Jews, Hindoos, and Mahometans; in whom "the military "spirit had totally done away with all distinctions of "religion; and who, being all animated by the true "feelings of soldiers, must have exulted after the hard-"ships they had undergone in bearing these trophies "of a successful march back to India." It is very remarkable and interesting as showing the view which the Duke, intimately acquainted with India and the Indian army as he was, would probably have taken of the causes of the recent revolt of the Sepoys, that he unhesitatingly pronounced that "though there were different castes "and religions composing that army, discipline and

"the military spirit had totally done away with all "such distinctions, and there was no chance of our "ever hearing in India of any difference of caste or "religion in the Indian, any more than in the ranks "of the British army." We may infer therefore that he would from the first have agreed with those who looked upon the mutiny as a national, not as a religious revolt, directed against us not as Christians but as foreigners, having for its object the restoration of the native princes of the country to their independent sovereignty.* He also took occasion to point out the difficulties of late years thrown in the way of the Indian Government "by the establishment of what is called "a free press, but which he made free to call a most "licentious press;" the influence of which was so mischievous that he professed that "for his part he "could not see how the operations of war could be "carried on in a satisfactory manner in India with such "a press constantly exercising its influence, and con-"nected through its correspondents with every canton-"ment of the army." And a remarkable instance of the soundness of his judgment on this point is supplied by the fact that on the breaking out of the revolt already mentioned, one of the earliest acts of the present Governor-General, Lord Canning, in spite of his anxiety to exercise his authority with all the lenity and moderation compatible with the safety of our Indian empire, was to

* It is remarkable that as long ago as the winter of 1845, Lieutenant Hodson (an officer whose early death was no common disaster to the whole nation) wrote to his father of the Sikhs, "It will scarcely be believed, but they had "actually purchased and prepared supplies as far into the interior of our "country as Delhi, and unknown to our authorities; and the whole of northern "India was, as usual, ready to rise upon us at an hour's notice."—'Twelve Years of a Soldier's Life in India,' p. 12. See also p. 70, where he speaks in 1848, of a still more extensive conspiracy "against the supremacy of the "British Government."

suspend the law which had given its liberty to the Indian press. And in his despatch to the Directors on the subject Lord Canning alleged as his reason for such a step "the effect direct and indirect upon the natives of "matter published in the newspapers when the subject "interests their passions;" the extent to which they confuse the sentiments of the individual writers "of "articles in the newspapers with the sentiments of the "English Governors of the country; the hatred excited "against the English Government by such publications "whenever they excite their fears or offend their feel-"ings;" and also the seditious conduct of some of the newspaper editors; giving as an instance the fact that on this very occasion of the revolt "the treasonable "proclamation of the King and mutineers of Delhi, "cunningly framed so as to inflame the Mahometan "population as much as possible against our Govern-"ment, was published in a respectable English news-"paper in Calcutta without note or comment."*

Lord Clanricarde's motion was rejected by a majority of more than three to one. But it is highly probable that the constant display of animosity against the Governor-General exhibited by the adherents of the preceding Ministry in both Houses of Parliament encouraged the Directors to take the unprecedented step of recalling him in the subsequent year. Not that they had any reason to suspect that the Duke's estimate of his great capacity for government was in any degree lowered. At the beginning of the session of 1844 the Duke, in seconding a motion made by Lord Ripon as President of the Board of Control, that the House of Lords should present its thanks to Sir C. Napier and his army for the conquest of Scinde, after having bestowed deserved

* 'Annual Register,' 1857, p. 329.

eulogy on the genius and courage of the General, and having also pointed out in him the same quality of inspiring all who were brought into contact with him with confidence, that has been remarked on in the earlier part of this work as so conspicuous in himself, had proceeded also to praise the promptitude of the Governor-General in promising ample rewards to the army for its victory at Meeanee, as having by that judicious and timely encouragement greatly stimulated the troops to continue to deserve approbation so frankly bestowed, and to display similar intrepidity in the impending battle at Hyderabad.

It has always been considered that praise comes with redoubled weight from a man who has himself been the object of praise,* and if this idea be correct no panegyric can ever have had more weight than those which fell from the lips of Wellington. Nor indeed were his eulogies of Lord Ellenborough the mere result of a generous desire to stand forward in the public defence of an absent servant of the Crown, but they proceeded from a deliberate and profound conviction of the greatness of the Governor-General's services, which he expressed to himself as unreservedly in his private letters as he did to the nation by his speeches in Parliament. But the Directors disregarded the opinion thus pronounced by him, though his intimate acquaintance with India gave a peculiar value to his judgment on Indian affairs; and likewise the solid benefits which had unquestionably been derived on the Affghan frontier and in Scinde from Lord Ellenborough's vigorous rule; and, seeing or believing that they saw in his interference in the affairs of Gwalior a fondness for war which they could not afford to indulge; and being also probably influenced in some degree by a

* Laudari a laudato viro.

feeling that he showed but scanty respect to their own superior authority, and too much inclination to act as if he were wholly independent of it, they of their own power recalled him, not consulting the Queen's Government on the subject, but merely announcing to them the resolution which they had adopted.

Such an act, for which there was no precedent, though the right of the Company to do it was unquestioned, became of course the immediate subject of discussion in Parliament. And the Duke did not hesitate to condemn the conduct of the Directors in the plainest terms. He had already written a strong letter of rebuke and remonstrance to the Directors, recapitulating Lord Ellenborough's great services, stating most strongly his own sense of the practical statesmanship which he had shown, and reminding them that men could not have everything they liked in this world; but that even kings had been compelled in more times and countries than one to retain ministers in their service with whom they would gladly have dispensed. And when the question was put to him in the House of Lords whether the King's Government was satisfied with the reason alleged for their acts by the Directors of the Company, he at once replied that so far from the ministers having concurred in Lord Ellenborough's recall, they "had "strongly remonstrated against it; that it had been "determined on by the Directors in defiance of the "known sentiments of the Cabinet; and that, though "there was no doubt whatever of the legal right of "the Directors to exercise such a power," he considered it to be "a right which they were bound to exercise "with discretion," and that his opinion, "as an in-"dividual who had had some experience in such matters, "was that the act under discussion was the most indis-

"creet exercise of power that he had known carried "into execution by anybody possessed of power since "he himself had had a knowledge of public affairs." He reminded the House that Lord Ellenborough's "acts "had been concurred in and sanctioned in every in- "stance;" he recapitulated the great success which had attended his administration though it had lasted "little "more than two years," making no express allusion to the retrieval of our disasters in Affghanistan, because that exploit had already been stamped by the approval of Parliament, but praising him now especially for the great energy and judgment which he had displayed in the equipment and support of the army recently employed in Gwalior, and for the skill which he had shown in providing for the maintenance of its military communications. He reminded them also that the Directors had taken upon themselves thus "to pronounce an adverse "judgment on his conduct, and to deprive the Govern- "ment of the best instrument that could be found to "perform the various duties of his great office, while "none of them, except the Secret Committee, had or "could have any knowledge whatever of the instructions "under which he had acted." Yet while thus indignant at the conduct of the Directors he repudiated all idea of making their indiscretion a plea for effecting any alteration in the constitution of the Company; though it was clear that it was a most anomalous power which the Directors thus possessed; and though it is not needful to enter into the reasons which influenced them to express their disapproval of the Governor-General's policy in so strong a manner, to enable us to pronounce that to do so in defiance of a contrary opinion expressed by the King's Government, was in itself, as Wellington pronounced it to be, an act of the grossest indiscretion.

CHAPTER LX.

Bills for Ecclesiastical Reform—Wellington's denunciation of the Repeal agitation—Supports the Endowment of Maynooth—The Queen visits Louis Philippe—Wellington discountenances the Petition of the Peninsular Officers for a Medal.

MATTERS of internal policy did not belong to his department, but still, as leader of the Government in the House of Lords, the Duke was continually called upon to speak in explanation or justification of their measures; and in the different debates which arose he showed an assiduity in mastering every subject from which the age at which he had now arrived might well have been held to have excused him, but which he still executed, because, to use his own language, "it was his "duty."* Thus, when Lord Powis, though generally a supporter of the Ministry, made, as a Welshman, a vigorous attempt to induce the Peers to prevent the union of the two Welsh bishoprics, Bangor and St. Asaph, Wellington opposed him in more than one carefully-considered speech, in which he went over the whole question, showing that the proposed union was not an isolated arrangement, but one of a series of measures devised by the Ecclesiastical Com-

* See his speech, July 11, 1844.

mission which had been appointed by the Crown to examine the whole questions of the Church revenues which were in the hands of chapters, with the view of distributing them anew in such a manner as might secure to the members of the Established Church a more extensive enjoyment of the privileges to which they were entitled. He argued with unquestionable wisdom that the more efficient and useful the Established Church was rendered, the more sincere would be the affection and attachment entertained towards it by its members; and that it was most especially necessary to give the Church that extended efficiency which would lead to so desirable a result in those districts of the north of England which, having formerly been almost desolate, had of late years, through the rapid growth of our manufactures, become densely peopled with an intelligent and inquiring population.

With this object the Commissioners had recommended the erection of two new bishoprics at Ripon and at Manchester, and the consolidation of the sees of Gloucester and Bristol, and of those of St. Asaph and Bangor; and though Wellington did not deny that such an arrangement might be attended with inconvenience, he contended that that inconvenience did not deserve to be regarded when compared with the greater evil of leaving the populous districts of the north any longer without the requisite episcopal superintendence; and he also argued that to provide those districts with such episcopal superintendence could only be done by the consolidation of other bishoprics, since there was such a jealousy of the Established Church in many quarters, and especially in some large towns, that it would not be easy to introduce additional bishops into the House of Lords.

This difficulty has since been partly surmounted by the appointment of bishops not having seats in Parliament, a step which may perhaps some day be found to have involved the admission of an objectionable, if not of a dangerous principle; but it may probably be contended also that on this point the Duke's argument was unsound, because the objection to the creation of additional bishops having seats in Parliament was not one founded on any solid or maintainable reason. It is quite true that the rulers of a nation, if they would deserve the character of statesmen, must look at facts rather than at abstract principles; must consider what men are and will be rather than what it might be wished that they were; but still, since the number of spiritual peers had remained unaltered for some centuries, during which that of the lay peers had been trebled or quadrupled, there evidently could be no reasonable ground for apprehension that a slight reinforcement of the episcopal bench would disturb the balance which even the bitterest foes of the Established Church could fairly desire to maintain.

In all other respects the Duke's speeches on this subject were worthy of our highest admiration; when attacked by one bishop as but little conversant with the subject, while admitting the fact to be so, he nevertheless showed an acquaintance with all its details far superior to that possessed by his critic; and no one could have given more emphatic testimony to the attainments and virtues of the chief dignitaries of the Church; to the necessity, with a view to the general benefit of the State, that those who are elevated to her highest offices should be "persons of the highest education and "attainments;" and to the propriety of the State taking care of their temporal welfare, and providing for their ample remuneration as for that of its civil servants.

And not only were his arguments in general sound, but the motive of his conduct in putting them forward was equally unimpeachable, being a sincere and avowed anxiety for the cause of true religion and of the Established Church, because he was convinced that she taught religion in its purest form.

Nor, as he subsequently showed when measures affecting the Irish Roman Catholics were brought forward, was his zeal for religion limited to that form of it which he himself professed; on the contrary, he displayed the greatest liberality in dealing with the claims of a rival sect, showing himself, on this question as on others, superior to narrow views of party, and disposed to take a statesmanlike view even of those subjects on which many honest and virtuous men seem to make a conscience of keeping their understandings in subjection to the prejudices and animosities of bygone ages. It was natural that he should take a peculiar interest in Ireland, and accordingly we find his attention at this time continually occupied by Irish questions, and a great number of his speeches called forth by his zeal for the welfare of his native island. His own great measure of 1829 had failed to tranquillize her people, who, always ardent and excitable, had given themselves up to the guidance of O'Connell, in spite of the abundant evidence which every part of his conduct gave that he was actuated by no motives but those of the most unprincipled selfishness; and, at his bidding, they had lately raised the cry of Repeal of the Union, and were yearly pouring large contributions into his coffers in the hope of enabling him to compel the Parliament to grant the boon which he persuaded them to look upon as indispensable to place their country in its proper position among the nations of Europe. With such a demand

1844.

Wellington, like all other statesmen in either country, saw that it would be a crime to temporize; he believed, as he told the Peers, "that there had never been a "country which had so advanced in improvement of "all descriptions as Ireland had in the years which had "elapsed since the Union;" and therefore he on every occasion declared in the strongest language "the deter- "mination of the ministers to preserve the Union "inviolate, and to call on Parliament to support them "in carrying into execution any measures which might "be considered necessary for that end." He also strenuously defended the conduct of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who had dismissed from the commission of the peace several magistrates for attending meetings convened for the purpose of promoting the repeal.

In his different speeches on this topic he briefly pointed out the benefit derived by Ireland itself from the Union, reminding his hearers of the attention at all times given by the united Parliament to Irish affairs, of the desire shown at all times to promote the interests of that country, and of the important measures actually at the time when he was speaking under the consideration of Parliament for the amelioration of the general condition of the Irish people; but he did not dwell so much on these topics, (thinking the advantages of the Union sufficiently established in the conviction of all honest men,) as on the means adopted by the advocates of repeal to force their measure on the attention of the nation; pointing out that their whole conduct showed that they had not any expectation of carrying such a measure by peaceable and lawful means, but that they trusted solely to agitation and to the terror which that agitation was calculated to produce. In fact, as he reminded the Peers, outrages had already been the result

of the meetings which had been attended by those magistrates whose dismissal was complained of by some of the Opposition; and moreover that such a result had been intended by the promoters of these meetings he proved by a reference to the "regular military array" in which those who had assembled at them had been organized, and to the language held by some of the principal speakers, who had boasted that "Napoleon had "not had such an army in Russia, nor the Duke of "Wellington at Waterloo."

He maintained therefore that in dismissing magistrates who had attended such manifestly illegal meetings the Government had only afforded that protection to the cause of good order and tranquillity which they were bound to afford. He did not deny that there was great poverty and distress in many parts of Ireland, but he did wholly repudiate the idea that these evils were relieved, or could be relieved by "marches of twenty-five "or thirty Irish miles a day to hear seditious speeches; "by subscriptions of thousands of pounds to the Repeal "rent, the O'Connell rent, and other funds of that "description. The poverty that prevailed," he truly said, "must be relieved by a perseverance in industry "and sobriety, not by a sobriety taken up by fits and "starts for the sake of a more orderly appearance at "seditious meetings." And he recommended as its best remedy that virtue which he himself had so often practised, patience; urging that "the evils from whence "that poverty proceeded were not to be cured in a day; "but that the remedies must be some time in operation "before their effect could be felt," and avowing on behalf of the Government a most sincere desire to employ for its relief every resource that could be practicable and advisable.

But while thus condemning repeal meetings, he deprecated with almost equal earnestness large assemblies even of persons whose opinions more nearly agreed with his own; thinking that no such meetings of any kind could take place without some danger to the public peace; and therefore he highly commended the Orangemen when in 1843 they refrained from their usual processions with which they had been wont to celebrate the triumph of King William. And in the subsequent years he again showed the perfect impartiality with which he was desirous to deal with all classes, by, on the one hand, maintaining it to be the positive duty of Parliament to uphold the Established Protestant Church in Ireland on the same footing as in this island; pointing out the benefits derived by all classes from its establishment, as not only the foundation upon which the union between the two countries rested, but as so involved with our whole system of religious toleration, that no attacks upon it could succeed without at the same time imperilling that great principle, and by a natural consequence the maintenance of the Reformation; and on the other hand, by supporting the Bill brought in by the Government for the more liberal endowment of the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth.

The College at Maynooth had been founded by Pitt before the Union, partly to meet a temporary difficulty which the wars of the French revolution had interposed to the former practice, according to which those Irish Roman Catholics who were destined for holy orders had been in the habit of repairing to French colleges for their instruction; and still more to prevent, even after the restoration of tranquillity in France, the recurrence of the necessity which had driven those whose influence at home must inevitably be so important to seek their education in and consequently to imbibe all their

early principles of action from a foreign country. But the endowment which had sufficed for the infant college became wholly inadequate to its requirements when in process of time it numbered, as it did in 1845, between four and five hundred students within its walls. The sum of nine thousand pounds a year originally allotted to the college was now insufficient not only to pay reasonable salaries to the professors, but even to provide the free students of the foundation with decent food and clothing. Accordingly, Peel with a judicious and magnanimous liberality had carried through the House of Commons a Bill to raise the yearly sum hitherto set apart for Maynooth to one of about three times that amount, which, according to his calculation, would be sufficient to place all the departments of the college on a satisfactory footing, and to admit of the number of students being raised to five hundred; while he also proposed to place the grant on a permanent and stable footing, and to form the trustees of the college into a corporation, in order that the college might be enabled to receive bequests or endowments of a limited and specified extent from the members of the Roman Catholic persuasion. The Bill though, or perhaps because, gratefully received by the Roman Catholics, the most able of whom in the House of Commons, Mr. Sheil, avowed his belief that it would greatly improve the character of the Roman Catholic priesthood in Ireland, was opposed with great bitterness in that House by a party headed by Sir Robert Inglis, which declared against it as a violation of the principles of the Reformation: it was however passed by a very large majority, and in June, 1845, the Duke moved its second reading in the House of Lords. He entered fully into the history of the original establishment of the college, showed how it had received the full sanction

of George III., whom no monarch that ever sat upon a throne had exceeded in his sincere attachment to the Protestant religion, and who did not give his consent to it till he had consulted the Archbishop of Canterbury on the subject; and how it had received the sanction of "a Parliament exclusively Protestant," and he argued convincingly that this history did of itself furnish the strongest possible proof that the measure "could not "have been considered at all injurious to the religious "opinions or establishments of this country." He admitted that the Act which had originally established the college was in some points "inconsistent with the "enactments of the code of laws by which the Refor- "mation was established in this country and in Ire- "land;" but he maintained also that it was "in no "respect inconsistent with the religious principles esta- "blished at the Reformation." And by a reference to former debates in both Houses of Parliament, he showed that though the details and the amount of the grant had from time to time been made subjects of discussion, the principle on which the money had each year been voted had never been controverted.

He reminded his hearers that since the foundation of the college the population of Ireland had been nearly trebled; and that the state of the college, produced mainly by this increase of the population, had become such that it was absolutely impossible to leave it in its existing condition; the grant must be either increased or discontinued. He reminded them also of the notorious fact that of that population seven-eighths were Roman Catholics, and would inevitably continue such; "that we must find the means of providing them with "ecclesiastics capable of administering to them the "rites of the Roman Catholic Church; and we must

"either have those ecclesiastics educated at home or "we must consent to and encourage the sending them "abroad." And, pointing to "the state of religion as "well as of politics in those foreign countries" to which alone they could be sent, and to the language held in those foreign countries on Irish questions, he maintained that no one could doubt that "to establish such a com- "munication between them and Ireland as to send to "them for education those who were to administer the "rites of religion to the bulk of the Irish population, "would be most objectionable; would be incompatible "with the safety of the country." It was his desire, and that of the Government, "to elevate the character "of the Irish Roman Catholic priests;" and this desire was founded on the undeniable fact that "they exercised "not only great spiritual influence over the minds of "those to whom they acted as spiritual guardians, but "also that they possessed great social influence." And the means by which he desired to elevate their character were of the most liberal kind. At present the poverty of the college and of the students narrowed the course of education to the study of a few theological books; he desired to bestow on them a more comprehensive training, to provide them with "instruction in literature "and science as well as in theology," so as to render them gentlemen in acquirements and spirit as well as by professional position.

From the very vehemence of opposition which the present Bill had provoked he drew an argument in favour of that provision contained in it which made the proposed grant permanent instead of annual, since nothing could be more prejudicial to the course of true religion as well as more dangerous to the peace and welfare of society than the constant recurrence of such

angry discussions; and he showed the absurdity of supposing that the religious principle which was involved in the grant of twenty-seven thousand pounds a year was not equally conceded by a grant of nine thousand pounds. That grant had been now made for fifty years, and scarcely any one proposed to abolish it; and those who had hitherto consented to give the smaller sum were clearly precluded from impugning the religious sincerity of those who only wished to change it to a larger amount sufficient for the purposes at present inadequately fulfilled, for which any sum at all was granted. "But," he concluded, "though there was no religious "principle involved in this question, there was a great "Christian principle involved in it—the principle of "abstaining from persecution. If we, the Protestants "of the kingdom, were strong, it was our duty not "to persecute the weak; it was our duty not even to "appear to persecute the weak: and therefore he en- "treated the Peers to stand by him in enforcing that "principle, and to give their unanimous assent to the "Bill."

Though not unanimously, yet by a large majority the House of Peers did stand by him and sanction the Bill. A measure passed only fourteen years ago to educate those, of whom the eldest were then but boys, cannot yet have produced much visible fruit; but it was a Bill so clearly dictated by the most enlightened feelings of religion as well as by the soundest policy (both which principles were established more convincingly by no one than by the Duke, who never shone to more advantage as a debater than in these discussions), that it is impossible to doubt that it will ultimately produce the best effects. And though a small party, influenced unquestionably by the sincerest though most mistaken sense

of religious duty, keep up a continual agitation to procure the repeal of a law thus passed by overpowering majorities in both Houses of Parliament, they would do far better to follow the example which, though his own, the Duke did not scruple on another occasion to recommend to general imitation. He declared that, though many laws had been passed of which he had disapproved, and which he had strenuously resisted, yet after such laws had been enacted "he had never failed to do every-"thing in his power to carry them into execution, what-"ever might have been his opinion of their inefficiency "in the first instance, or whatever might have been his "views as to the consequences which were likely to "follow such measures of legislation. This," he affirmed, "was the rule which honest and honourable men "should move upon."

If mere honesty were required to act up to such a rule, there could be but little fear of those who still from time to time renew their opposition to Maynooth acting up to it, since their personally high characters and conscientious honesty are unquestionable; but to do so also requires an amount of unselfish patriotism, of a spirit ready to yield up its own prejudices, and even the dearest of all prejudices, sectarian animosity, for the tranquillity of the State, which is a virtue far more rare and difficult of attainment. And we must probably trust to the Irish Roman Catholic priests themselves to show that party the innocence of the Bill of 1845, and indeed its practically beneficial effect on their own character and practice, before we can expect them wholly to desist from provoking fruitless discussions on a subject on which Parliament has pronounced a judgment which even they must feel to be irrevocable.

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The apprehensions which at one time Wellington had entertained of a regular outbreak in Ireland had died away. The repeal meetings had been suppressed by the energy of the Irish Government, aided in no small degree by his own military arrangements; and when at last the Government showed themselves strong enough to bring O'Connell to trial and procure his conviction on a charge of sedition, it was evident even to the most disaffected that the law was too strong for them, and that they would derive no support in a contest with it from the good-will of the nation in general. But in the opinion of Wellington very great dangers threatened the peace of Europe. The melancholy accident which terminated the life of the Duc d'Orléans, though that prince was not believed to be friendly to any close alliance between his country and ourselves, nevertheless appeared to him a most unfortunate circumstance for the world, from the uncertainty which it threw around the succession to the French throne in the event of Louis Philippe dying while the heir was still an infant. Of Louis Philippe himself he had at all times had a very bad opinion, and it was with great regret that he saw the political alliance between the two courts converted into something like a personal friendship by the visit of the Queen to Eu in the autumn of 1843. He ascribed the visit to the influence of King Leopold, the uncle of our own Sovereign, and the son-in-law of the French king; and it was a remarkable circumstance that he himself was the very last member of the Cabinet who received information of the Queen's intentions.* At a later period his royal mistress herself came to acknowledge the justice of his distrust of Louis Philippe, being herself justly offended not only at the

* Raikes's Diary, iv., 288, 441.

grasping ambition which that monarch displayed in bringing about the marriage of his son with the Spanish princess, but still more at the disingenuous trickery which he employed to effect his purpose; though subsequently, when he was driven from his throne, her royal and womanly feelings of hospitality and pity effaced or overbore her displeasure; and her friendly reception of the exiled family showed that as a becoming sense of her own dignity had led her to feel, so also a princely magnanimity taught her at such a moment to forgive an injury.

Wellington's popularity at this time was such as has never fallen to the lot of any subject to enjoy; it was not limited to royal visits, or to public meetings to erect statues in his honour, though these were not wanting; but it was shown in the respectful gaze with which passers-by marked his steps and his air, and thronged the places which afforded the most probable chance of gratifying their eyes with the sight of his honoured countenance. He used to ride at this time a horse of remarkable appearance, a dark bay with a silver mane and tail; and every afternoon when the sight of a groom leading him in front of the Horse Guards gave signs that the Duke might be expected to come forth from his office, a crowd would gather round the well-known steed, examining all his points with the deepest apparent interest till his master appeared, when in a moment every hat was raised as though he had been a royal prince, and often the respectful silence of the throng was broken by a cheer, which speedily became unanimous, as the old warrior raising his finger to his hat cantered down the shady ride.

It is painful to think that the only exception to the reverence with which he was at this time regarded was

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to be found in the army, and especially in that part of it which had fought under his own command. It is well known that a medal had been given to every one, whether officer or private soldier, who had formed a part of the army which had been engaged at Waterloo; and this unprecedented honour was even at the time viewed with considerable dissatisfaction by those officers of the Peninsular army who not unnaturally looked upon their warfare of six years' duration as far more arduous than, and fully as honourable and important, if not so striking in its effect, as the brief campaign in Flanders. They argued that the power of Napoleon had in reality received as deadly wounds at Salamanca and Vittoria as at Waterloo, and they murmured loudly that while they who had borne the burden and heat of the day had been left undistinguished, their more fortunate comrades who had wrought but for one hour were by this medal pointed out to the eyes of the whole nation as its especial heroes. Once they applied to Wellington to recommend that they should receive the same distinction, but he declined to aid them, on the ground that it was not his duty to volunteer his unasked opinion on such a subject to his Sovereign; and for many years their discontent took no more definite shape; but when, after the Affghan campaigns, the Governor-General of India adopted the precedent set in 1815, and ordered medals to be struck and distributed to every individual who had fought in them, and when a similar medal was given to the troops who had served in China, the feeling that their own services had been unduly passed over gained additional strength, and they could no longer keep silence under their grievance. Fortunately for them, one of their body was a man of the highest rank and of

considerable political influence, the Duke of Richmond; who as a captain in the 52nd had been so severely wounded at Orthez that he was forced to retire from his regiment, and who fully sharing the discontent of his undecorated comrades, undertook to present a petition from them to the House of Lords entreating the Peers to bring their case under the notice of her Majesty, in the hope that their Sovereign might thus be induced to confer on them the honour which they so greatly coveted. To their great grief, and it must be added to their great indignation, their petition was opposed by the Commander-in-Chief. He fully admitted that, as the petitioners boasted, "he had never mentioned or "referred to the war in the Peninsula without praising "their conduct;" but he contended that Parliament had no business to interfere in such a matter. He referred to the refusal which he had himself formerly given to these officers when they requested him to become their advocate, and repeated the grounds on which he had given that refusal; at the same time he denied that the officers of the Peninsular army had gone without their reward. Many had received "medals "struck in commemoration of actions of gallantry; "many had been promoted by special brevets, and other "arrangements had been made in their favour, while "seven had actually been promoted to the peerage for "their services in this very army." He justified the presentation of the Waterloo medals by a reference to the anxiety felt for the result of the battle, and to the important consequences which it had had in securing the permanent peace of Europe. He bestowed high praise on the conduct of Lord Ellenborough in following that precedent with respect to the Indian army, on the ground that at that particular time and in that country

" it was important to take a step promptly to revive the " spirit of the army, and its confidence in its own exer- " tions." He further justified the bestowal of a similar medal on the army which had served in China, arguing that theirs was a singular case, partly because of the anxiety with which our ignorance of China had caused that war to be regarded; partly because many of the operations had been carried on by the Company's native troops, who, as was well known, had strong prejudices against leaving their native land for foreign service; and most especially he dwelt on the fact that the gift of these medals was the spontaneous act of the Government. Lastly, he reminded the Peers that the Peninsular army " was not the only successful army which had served " their country; British troops had fought in Egypt, " had fought in Calabria;" our sailors too had gained great victories, but had received no general medal; and in short, he contended that the measure prayed for by the Peninsular officers could not be carried into effect without involving the necessity of rewarding " everybody " who had ever served during the whole war."

It is possible that this last argument gave especial offence to the officers whose petition he was discountenancing, since they not unnaturally thought that it was not for the man who had gained such unparalleled honours by their exertions under his command now to disparage their triumphs by comparing them to those which, though doubtless glorious, were still so incontestably inferior to them, as the victories of Maida and Alexandria. But they deeply felt the whole of his conduct on this subject; and when after two years of persevering advocacy of their claims the Duke of Richmond succeeded in obtaining for them the boon which they sought, the satisfaction which they felt in displaying their gratitude to him for his exertions in their

cause was greatly alloyed in the minds of many of them by the feeling that that gratitude ought rather to have been called forth by the commander himself under whose guidance they had earned the reward so long withheld and so dearly prized.

It is certain that the conduct of Wellington in thus refusing to press the claims of his Peninsular troops to the distinction they desired was entirely consistent with the principles which he had always avowed, that all such rewards were valueless unless spontaneously bestowed; and also that for him unasked to have put forward those claims would have been an interference with the prerogatives of the Crown, to which it belonged to give or to withhold such boons at its unquestioned discretion. It is equally clear that his conduct in this respect proceeded from no indifference to the merits of the officers concerned; for he was always most sensitively alive to the honour of the whole army, as he shortly afterwards showed by his vigorous defence of one regiment which an inconsiderate expression in an Indian despatch had represented as having been seized with "a panic," but which he proved by a reference to the almost unparalleled losses which it had sustained in the action spoken of to be wholly undeserving of such an imputation. Still it is impossible to avoid wishing that he had decided differently. He had blamed others for acting "as if "men were stocks and stones;" and it would seem that, even allowing his strict duty to have been such as he conceived it to be, the present case was exactly one in which he might with grace and propriety have allowed the requirements of duty to be modified by a feeling of grateful affection towards those to whose glorious performance of their own duty he himself so greatly owed the proud position which he had attained. Nelson, to whom we have more than once compared

him, when he found that medals such as had been given to the captains of ships engaged at St. Vincent, Camperdown, and the Nile, were not given to those who fought at Copenhagen, and that the Common Council omitted to return its thanks to the fleet for that victory, resented the slight with which he conceived his sailors were treated as an injury done to himself, and wrote letters of most earnest remonstrance to the First Lord of the Admiralty and to the Lord Mayor; not because he was anxious for compliments to himself, but because he, whose very last words gave evidence of as ceaseless a desire for the performance of his duty as was ever displayed by Wellington himself, looked upon it as "his duty to prove to the brave fellows, his companions "in danger, that he had not failed at every proper place "to represent as well as he was able their bravery and "meritorious conduct."* And it cannot be denied that that warmth of heart which made our naval hero so beloved would have been a desirable addition to the character of Wellington. A poet of no inconsiderable reputation in an ode on Waterloo had lately called him "the Iron Duke;" and the epithet had been very generally adopted as a felicitous expression of his general character; but however desirable and necessary to greatness may be the unyielding steadiness of nerve which it implies, such rigour is a less attractive quality when it pervades the feelings. Human nature recoils at the idea of invariably subjecting them to the rules of an unswerving logic, and there can be no doubt that Wellington's inflexible adherence to the principle which he had laid down, however logically sound it may have been, gave real pain to the army, as preventing them from uniting love for his person to admiration for his genius.

* Southey's Nelson, pp. 288, 289, 292.

CHAPTER LXI.

Blight of the potatoes—Increased agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws—Lord John Russell joins it—Peel proposes to suspend them—The Duke objects, but does not refuse his consent—Peel resigns—Resumes office—Decides on repealing the Corn Law—The Duke's speech on the subject—The Repeal of the Corn Law is carried—Ministers are defeated, and resign.

AT the end of the session of 1845 the power of the Administration appeared to be firmly established, and there seemed reason to hope that the Sovereign and the country had at last secured the great blessing of a strong Government; while there was no doubt whatever that during the last four years, Peel's financial skill having removed the difficulties in which others had involved it, the whole kingdom had made great progress in every kind of improvement. Yet at this very moment causes were at work which speedily produced the downfall of the Cabinet, and for a while changed the universal prosperity into a condition of unprecedented suffering and distress.

The summer was scarcely half over when it became known that a blight had in many districts greatly damaged the potatoes, and it was soon ascertained that it was so universal (though the origin and cause of it are to this day undiscovered) that it was scarcely an exaggeration to affirm that the whole potato crop

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was destroyed throughout the United Kingdom. The loss of a crop which formed so principal an article of the food of the labouring population in general, and on which the lower classes in Ireland depended so exclusively, naturally caused the greatest anxiety to the ministers. The blight had spread to foreign countries, so that no importation of potatoes from France or Germany could be looked for. And the evil was aggravated by a continuance of bad weather during the autumn, which materially affected the corn harvest also; so that accounts poured into the Home Office from all quarters, from the richest counties in England and from Scotland as well as from Ireland, representing the strong probability that existed that the most severe distress if not actual famine impended over the lower classes throughout the kingdom.

So fearful a danger gave fresh vigour to the enemies of the Corn Laws. An agitation for the total repeal of all duties on the importation of grain had been carried on with great vehemence for the last two or three years, and it now gained many recruits, while several also of those who did not advocate freedom of trade as a permanent law were eager to see the ports opened for the admission of corn duty free for a limited period. No minister could view the state of affairs without the gravest apprehension and anxiety; and in Peel's mind great anxiety was accustomed to produce a distrust of his former opinions. Not that he had as yet any doubt of being able to preserve the principle of a protective duty on corn if he desired to do so, since the leaders of the Whig party were quite as much pledged to protection as he was himself, and the difference between them was merely a question of detail, whether that object could be best attained by a fixed or by a variable duty.

But he had all along seen clearly that a fixed duty must ultimately produce its own repeal, since it could not be maintained at a time of scarcity. And he entertained reasonable doubts whether a temporary suspension of the existing law by an Order in Council, such as his more moderate advisers pressed upon him, must not inevitably lead to the same end, from the practical difficulty which would attend the reimposition of duties after they had been dispensed with for ever so brief a period. It was however just possible that after such a suspension some modification of the existing law might be devised, which by permitting the introduction of Indian corn and grain from our own colonies at a nominal duty, and probably by a reduction also of the rates imposed by the existing scale, might still save the principle of protection and at the same time satisfy the desire of some of the least vehement of the Corn Law repealers. Accordingly the first proposal which Peel made to his colleagues (since some measures of instant relief were in his judgment indispensable) was that they should issue an Order in Council such as has been already mentioned, and at the same time should announce to Parliament (when called together, as it must at once have been, to sanction that Order) their intention of bringing forward a modification of the existing law conceived in such a spirit. To this proposal however he found the Cabinet almost unanimously adverse; though some of them founded their objection on the argument that till the whole of the crops of the year were got in the proof of the necessity of such measures was insufficient. The decision on the question was therefore postponed till the Cabinet should meet at the end of November; and in the interim the difficulties of the ministers were increased by Lord John

Russell, who having, as it seems probable, obtained some intimation of Peel's intentions,* resolved to be beforehand with him; and issued an address to the electors of the City of London, the place which he represented in Parliament, in which he not only imputed to the existing Corn Law the effect of greatly aggravating the present distress, but also declared that he himself had wholly changed his opinion on the question, and that he was now convinced that the Legislature "ought "to abstain from all interference with the supply of "food." And expressing his further belief that "the "Government appeared to be waiting for some excuse "to give up the present Corn Law," he urged "the "people by petition, by address, by remonstrance to "afford them the excuse they sought."

From this letter Peel not unnaturally drew the conclusion that the Whig party was prepared as a body to coalesce with the agitators for the repeal of the Corn Law; and it was clear that such an union must have made the prospect of a successful resistance to such a measure very doubtful at any time, and especially at one when the pressure of instant and severe distress might naturally be expected to dispose the minds of a large section of the community to connect that distress with the existing state of the law, and on that account to desire a change. The Cabinet had already taken energetic measures for the temporary alleviation of the sufferings which they foresaw, placing a large sum of money at the disposal of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to be expended at his discretion in the purchase of food; and

* The Duke of Bedford was staying at Windsor Castle at the same time with Sir R. Peel about the beginning of November; when it was remarked that Peel could speak of nothing but the danger of a famine in Ireland: from which the Duke of Bedford himself at once drew the conclusion that the minister was intending to repeal the Corn Law.

purchasing themselves a quantity of Indian corn in the United States: but it was obvious that any relief that could be given in that way must speedily be exhausted; and Peel naturally thought it the duty of Government to look further and to take measures of precaution against the distress which, as he was painfully apprehensive, was only too likely to grow into calamity. He therefore in a circular note again pressed upon his colleagues the propriety of instantly suspending the Corn Law; not concealing his conviction that such a step involved a necessity of the immediate consideration of alterations to be permanently made in that law, though, if he already meditated its entire repeal, any such idea on his part was very obscurely intimated in the expression that "he ought rather to say that it "involved the question of the principle and degree of "protection to agriculture."

Apparently however the Duke either discerned such a purpose in his mind, or else perceived that repeal must be the inevitable consequence of suspension, since the first words of his reply stated himself "to be one "of those who thought the continuance of the Corn "Laws essential to the agriculture of the country in "its existing state, and particularly to that of Ireland; "and a benefit to the whole community." And he expressed his "fear that it would be found that this "country would cease to be the desirable and sought-"after market of the world, if the interests of agricul-"ture should be injured by a premature repeal of those "laws." Still he agreed that the Cabinet ought "to "look forwards; and, if it were necessary to suspend "the Corn Laws to avoid real evils resulting from a "scarcity of food, not to hesitate" to encounter that responsibility. At the same time his practical sagacity

pointed out that it would not be sufficient for the ministers to be convinced themselves of the necessity of thus suspending the law, without also "making every effort "to convince others of it;" reminding Peel how closely his Government was connected with the landed interest, "the support of which would probably be withdrawn "from them, unless they should be able to show this "necessity clearly."

But he added that, though "his own judgment would "lead him to maintain the Corn Law, his only object "in public life was to support Sir Robert Peel's Ad-"ministration, since a good Government for the country "was more important than Corn Laws or any other con-"sideration." And therefore, if Sir Robert considered that his duty required him to persist in his proposal, "he earnestly recommended that the Cabinet should "support him, and he for one declared that he would "do so," intimating at the same time that he should prefer such alterations in respect to certain articles of food as "might appear desirable, and might not be "inconsistent with the principle and object of the law."*

It is evident that the consideration which influenced the Duke in this declaration was that the Cabinet had only a choice of evils before them, and that their duty as wise men was to choose the least; and his habit of using strong expressions probably led him in some degree to overstate his opinion of the importance of the Corn Laws when he described them as "essential "to the agriculture of the country;" since had they been so it is scarcely conceivable that any mischief could have been greater than that to be expected from their repeal. At all events the whole of the Cabinet was influenced neither by his argument nor by his example. Nor was the inclination of those members of the

* See the Duke's Memorandum in Peel's Memoirs, ii., p. 199.

Administration who dissented from him diminished by a proposal which Peel formally made two days afterwards, to propose to Parliament a modification of the existing Corn Law which should at once make a great reduction in the duty payable, and should also provide for the annual diminution of that duty till it should be entirely extinguished. Some positively refused to be parties to such a measure; others whose objection to it in itself, though still strong, was less inflexible, reminded the Prime Minister of the degree in which their supporters looked upon them as "pledged to the main-"tenance of the principle of protection in some shape or "other," and expressed a not unreasonable doubt whether they could now themselves propose a measure leading to the total abandonment of that principle without such injury to "their characters as public men as would be "fraught with fatal results to the country's best in-"terests; such as the entire destruction of the Con-"servative party by the destruction of confidence in "its leaders; which, since that party was the only "barrier that remained against the revolutionary effects "of the Reform Bill, must lead to the ultimate triumph "of unrestrained democracy."* And, after much consideration of what was best for the country to which the maintenance of their personal characters for political honesty could not fail to be of the greatest importance, Peel resolved on resigning his office; and being authorized by those of his colleagues who were determined still to uphold the existing law to declare that nevertheless they were not prepared to undertake the formation of an Administration on that principle, he further recommended his Sovereign to entrust that task to Lord John Russell; voluntarily promising at the same time

* See the letters of Lord Wharncliffe and Mr. Goulburn to Sir R. Peel.—Peel's Memoirs, ii., 201—208.

to support the new Government to be formed by that nobleman in such a measure for the repeal of the Corn Law combined with a revision of the taxes to render the repeal more palatable to the landed interest, as he had sketched out in his letter to his London constituents, from the promises held out in which it was obviously impossible for him to recede. To Lord John therefore the Queen had immediate recourse, expressing at the same time her hope that the Duke of Wellington would still retain the command of the army; but, though the Duke at once consented to obey her Majesty's wishes in this respect Lord John soon found his execution of the task which he had undertaken embarrassed by difficulties insurmountable because originating in divisions among the Whig party itself; and after a few days of fruitless endeavour he relinquished the attempt to form a Cabinet; and the Queen in consequence required Peel to return to her service.

With a requisition thus absolutely forced upon her Majesty by circumstances he felt it to be his duty unhesitatingly to comply; and he at once reassembled his former colleagues and announced to them that he had resumed his former office. It was clear that the state of affairs was materially altered by the proved impossibility of the existence of any other Administration; and accordingly they all, with the exception of Lord Stanley, now agreed to stand by him and support him even in a measure for the total repeal of the Corn Law, to which, as they were aware, his promise to support Lord John Russell had pledged him. Lord Stanley's opinion of the necessity of maintaining the Corn Law was unaltered by anything which had passed; and accordingly he resigned the seals of the Colonial Office, which were accepted by Mr. Gladstone, and one or two other changes in the arrangement of the different

offices took place. But as the present work is only concerned to relate the part which the Duke took in these affairs, that will be best explained by a speech which he addressed to the House of Lords when shortly after the meeting of Parliament the subject was brought under discussion by the Duke of Richmond, who regarded the past conduct and future intentions of the Administration with the most uncompromising displeasure.

Wellington admitted frankly that when Peel first proposed to the Cabinet to suspend the Corn Law he had been one of those who thought such a step unnecessary; and he would himself have preferred measures calculated to provide employment during the winter for the lower classes, whose difficulties, as he apprehended, were likely to arise more from the high price of their food than from its positive scarcity; (in fact his colleagues had so far adopted this view of his as to appoint a commission to carry it out to some extent;) while, as he argued, the Corn Law through the wise operation of its sliding scale might be expected very speedily to suspend itself by the reduction of the import duty to a shilling. He admitted also that he had differed from the Prime Minister on the necessity of making any essential alteration in the existing law, though aware that some trifling modification of some of its details was expedient. Still he would not have insisted on his own opinion on either of these points. The proposal of them had produced great divisions in the Cabinet, and above all things he thought it important to reconcile those differences. "Having," he said, "served "the Crown of England now for above fifty years he "considered it his duty on all occasions to endeavour "to promote the interests of the State." And in his judgment nothing was so important to those interests as "to preserve in union a Government which enjoyed the

"confidence of the Sovereign, of the public, and of "both Houses of Parliament." When he found himself unable to restore unanimity among his colleagues he had, he added, fully approved of the resignation of the whole body, because it was manifestly impossible for a divided Cabinet to bring forward any measures on the subject before them with any possibility of success, and almost equally so for a Cabinet weakened by the secession of some of its ablest members.

He himself had then retired to his country seat. But when Peel sent for him on his resumption of office he looked upon the case as totally altered by the proof which the events of the few preceding days had given that no other Government but that of Sir R. Peel was possible. "He had," he said, "highly applauded Peel "for consenting to resume office under such circum- "stances; he had been delighted at his conduct; it was "exactly the course which he should have followed "himself under similar circumstances. He had deter- "mined that he himself, for one, would stand by him; "he had felt it his duty to do so, thinking that the "formation of a Government in which her Majesty "would have confidence was of greater importance "than any opinion of any individual on the Corn "Law or any other law." At the same time he admitted that when he on this occasion agreed to support Peel, he was fully aware that that minister must now, in consequence of his conduct during the recent negotiation, propose a far more sweeping alteration in the Corn Law than any which he had previously contemplated. He expressed his sincere hope that the measures to be proposed would be found not injurious to agriculture nor unsatisfactory to the country; but whatever might be thought of them he maintained that his own course of duty had been clear. "Situated as he was in this

"country; highly rewarded as he had been by the Sove-
"reign and the people of England, he could not refuse
"that Sovereign to aid her to form a Government when
"called upon, in order to enable her Majesty to meet
"Parliament and to carry on the business of the
"country; and he claimed from the House an acquies-
"cence in the principle which he had laid down that he
"positively could not refuse to serve his Sovereign when
"thus called upon."

In forming a judgment on Wellington's conduct in this affair as explained by himself, it is plain that we must discard from our minds the merits of the Corn Law itself, as he did; and that the question to be decided, and a most important question it is, is whether on a subject of such undoubted importance a minister can possibly be justified by any foreign considerations in consenting to and advocating a measure which intrinsically he disapproves. It must be observed in the first place that the principle which he now advanced was not a new one; it was the very same which he had avowed and on which he had acted in 1832 when he endeavoured, as we have seen, to form a Government to carry a Reform Bill. It is also clear that if his conduct was defensible then, the case in his favour was much stronger now: at that time it was still possible for Lord Grey to carry on the Government, as indeed he eventually did; but now the members of Peel's former Cabinet who were favourable to the maintenance of the existing Corn Law had avowed it to be impossible for them to construct a Government on that principle; and the Opposition after an attempt to form an Administration had been forced to confess their failure. In such a state of affairs, coupled with the personal undertaking which Peel had given to support Lord John Russell, it was clear that the Corn Laws were doomed; and Wellington, accepting

their abolition as a fact already as practically accomplished as if the Bill for their repeal had actually received the royal assent, acquiesced in it as he had acquiesced in the Reform Bill, and turned his whole attention to the object of so strengthening the Queen's Government as to induce others to acquiesce in it also, and to refrain from prolonging a struggle in which success was unattainable. That it was unattainable was owing to no act of his; they were not repealed because he consented to resume his place in the Cabinet, but he resumed his place because by keeping aloof he could not have saved them; though at the same time it is undeniably true that his character for practical wisdom, and his vast influence over his brother Peers, did greatly diminish the opposition offered to the Government measure, and secured for it a larger majority than it could otherwise have commanded.

It was on the 28th of May that, on the last night of the debate on the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords, the Duke rose to press its instant adoption. It was not a naked and immediate repeal of all duties on the importation of corn that he had to advocate. As on a former occasion Peel had entered into a comprehensive view of the whole tariff, and had not only proposed a very considerable reduction in the present tax upon corn, which reduction was to last for three years, at the end of which the duty was to be diminished to one shilling (that shilling being retained for statistical objects); but he had also taken the duties on a great variety of other things into his consideration, reducing them all very greatly, and calculating in his own mind that many of the reductions which he thus brought forward, such as those on the importation of articles of clothing, would be looked on by the farmer as no trivial compensation for the loss of protection to his

corn. The Bill provided at the same time for the relief of the landed interest by the improved management of many of the burdens which had been previously laid upon it, though Peel now for the first time denied that the poor rate deserved to be classed among those burdens, and though in the tithe, the payments which undeniably fell exclusively upon the land, it was impossible to effect any alteration whatever. He likewise proposed to encourage an improved cultivation of the land by advancing to the agriculturist loans from the national treasury to enable him to effect such improvements in the land as were expensive at first, but by the increased productiveness which they effected were certain to be ultimately remunerative. These concomitant provisions of the Bill evidently made the Duke's task in advocating it somewhat easier, though even then he felt it an arduous and delicate undertaking, and avowed his own feeling that he addressed "the Peers on this occasion "under many disadvantages;" disadvantages arising partly from the dislike entertained to the Bill by many of his political associates and most intimate friends; and partly from the prejudices which many of his hearers had conceived against himself "for having adopted the "course which he had taken on the subject." On this topic he said no more now than that having already stated his reasons for his conduct, he was himself so satisfied with their soundness that if the same circumstances should present themselves to him again to-morrow "he should again take the same course." Not that he pretended any indifference to the view which the Peers in general, or the Conservative party in particular might entertain of his conduct. On the contrary, he avowed frankly that "he should be exceedingly "concerned if any dissatisfaction respecting his motives "remained in the minds of any of their lordships."

He admitted that some might argue that, with the personal feelings of gratitude and obedience and duty towards the Sovereign which he had avowed, "he ought "to have no relation with party, and that party ought "not to rely on him." However that point might be decided, he admitted his own feeling "that he had never "had any claim to the confidence which they had all re-"posed in him for a considerable number of years. Cir-"cumstances had given it to him in some cases; and "in others the zeal with which he had endeavoured to "serve their lordships, to promote their lordships' views, "and his desire to facilitate business in that House. If "that confidence were now to be broken up," he confessed that "he should deeply lament it." But still whatever might be the cost to himself, he urged the Peers most earnestly to give their sanction to the Bill before them. He pressed his counsel the more because, in his opinion at the moment, that night "was probably "the last on which he should ever venture to ad-"dress to them any advice at all." But even while doing so, it is a striking proof of the doubt that he himself felt with respect to the measure that he forbore altogether to rest his advocacy of it on its own merits, but dwelt chiefly on the impossibility of rejecting it with safety to the country. He argued that having been "recommended by the speech from the throne, "and having been passed by a majority of the House of "Commons, it had already received the approval of "two branches of the Legislature, and that it was "perilous to the constitution of the House of Peers "for them to try to stand alone, placing themselves "in violent opposition to the Crown and the House of "Commons." There is no doubt that this was an unconstitutional argument, and an unjustifiable use of the name of the Crown, since no rule was ever more

fully established than that all reference to the opinion of the Sovereign must be avoided in Parliamentary debates, and if the speech from the throne were looked upon as giving any indications of that opinion, and not as merely expressive of the intentions of the Administration, it would be improper for any measures to be recommended in it at all. So great however was the respect in which the Duke was held that this remarkable language was allowed to pass without remonstrance; and when he urged the Peers to recollect that, even if they defeated the present Administration on this Bill, the Government which would succeed to power would undoubtedly propose a similar measure, he was presenting to them a practical view of the case which probably had the greatest effect in determining their votes. The second reading of the Bill was carried by a considerable majority, and the third reading was unopposed except by an amendment on which the mover, the Duke of Richmond, declined to take a division; and before the end of June it was finally passed into a law.

In considering this measure, the discussion of which agitated the country so violently for many years, it is certain that the ill effects which its opponents anticipated from it have not ensued. It may be and probably is true that the discoveries of gold in foreign countries which, though wholly unexpected when the Bill passed, began before the end of the following year to pour riches of unexampled amount into the country, contributed greatly to counteract the expected mischief by supplying us with gold sufficient to pay for the foreign corn which we required. But the real safety of the measure, we may hope, lay in a more permanent and more creditable cause: in the inherent energy of the British race, which increased difficulties only stimulate to increased exertion. The British farmer notoriously far surpasses the foreign

agriculturist in capital and in the skilful application of that capital, and the fact of his being close to his market alone gives him a great advantage over those who, before their crops can reach us, have to send them a voyage of several thousand miles. And so it has proved; for while vast importations of corn have taken place every year since the repeal of the Corn Law, the price of corn obtained by the English farmer has at all times been sufficiently high; and the prophecies of those who foreboded that it would fall so low as to drive out of cultivation much of the land on which corn had previously been grown have been completely falsified.

Thus much may be said of the practical effect of the repeal of the law. If on the other hand we look to the principle on which the law was so long maintained, it seems clear that since a large revenue must be collected in the country, much of which is necessarily derived from taxes on the importation of articles procured from foreign lands, there is no reason why a portion of the revenue, if procurable from such sources, might not as justly and wisely be derived from a tax upon grain as upon other articles of general use and primary necessity, such as tea, sugar, or woollen and linen fabrics. But, as the Duke himself had stated, a tax upon corn could not be relied on as a source of revenue, owing to the uncertainty which must always exist as to the quantity which would be imported in a year. Accordingly the tax was imposed and defended by the advocates of a fixed duty as well as by the champions of the sliding scale solely as a measure of protection, to enable the farmer to command so remunerative a price for his corn as might stimulate him to grow as large a quantity of it as possible in order to prevent the people from ever becoming dependent on foreigners for their necessary

food. But this principle was open to two great objections: firstly, that its enemies could always represent it to the populace, with almost irresistible plausibility, as chiefly a protection to the landlord to enable him to keep up his rents at an undue height; and secondly, that no one who saw the rapid and regular increase of population which was taking place in these islands could imagine it possible for us long to continue independent of foreign countries for a considerable portion of the supply of our necessary food; and that therefore it was our wisest policy to lay the foundation of our trade in it with those countries from which we must expect to procure it while the quantity which we required was comparatively small, instead of waiting till it became so large as to produce a serious derangement of our financial system by the suddenness and greatness of the change which, if we persisted in maintaining the Corn Laws to the last possible moment, we should some day or other find ourselves compelled to admit. In fact the wisdom of free trade as a general rule being almost universally admitted, the burden of proving their case clearly lay on those who affirmed that an exception to this principle ought to be made in the case of corn, and not on those who denied the propriety of any exception whatever. That burden had been supported by no one with more fertility of argument than by Peel; and when he confessed himself unable to sustain it any longer, it is hardly too much to say that it was proved to be not sustainable.

The speech which the Duke made on the question did not prove, as he had anticipated, the last he ever made, but it was the last he ever addressed to Parliament as a minister of the Crown. He had stated in it that "it "was clear that whatever might be the fate of the "Bill, the object which he himself had had in view in

"resuming his seat in her Majesty's councils" (the maintenance of Peel's Government) "would not be attained;" and indeed one great evil had followed the course which Peel had taken on the Corn Laws, namely, the destruction of a general confidence in his honesty as well as in his ability (since it could not be denied that he had been as deeply pledged to their maintenance as a public man could be pledged to his future line of conduct on any question whatever), and the consequent disruption of the powerful party which had placed him and hitherto had supported him in office. This result the Duke saw and deplored: he had seen it indeed from the first instant that Parliament reassembled. He did not look on it as one which at all affected his own position, for, from the moment in which he consented to retain the command of the army in the event of Lord John Russell succeeding in forming a Government, he considered himself as having taken up a neutral position, and as having definitively severed himself from all political connections. But he lamented it for the sake of the country and of the Conservative party, with the predominance of whose principles his fondest prepossessions and his most deliberate judgment led him to identify the welfare of the nation. And his most thoughtful counsels were directed to the reunion of that party. Accordingly when, a few days after the meeting of Parliament, Lord Stanley consulted him on the subject of its divided state, and of the best means of restoring to it the unity and strength of which Peel's sudden conversion to the views of his former opponents had for a time deprived it, he gave his advice as frankly and cordially as it had been asked. Whatever his opinion of Peel's judgment and courage may have been his own faith in his honesty was in no degree shaken: but he agreed with Lord Stanley that

the alienation of the Conservatives from Peel could not be expected to be other than permanent, and that any attempt on his part to re-establish himself in their confidence must be fruitless. Independently of the neutral ground on which he conceived that his own conduct at this crisis had placed himself, his age forbade his taking any permanent share in politics for the future: while everything combined to point out Lord Stanley as the fittest person to lead the party thus suddenly deprived of its former chiefs. He therefore earnestly exhorted that nobleman at once to assume the post for which his position and his great ability so pre-eminently qualified him, and which circumstances seemed to force upon him; to rally the broken fragments of his party, and, (in this enjoining the same line of conduct which he himself had practised,) to be ready whenever called upon to place his services at the disposal of his sovereign and country.

It is beside our present purpose to dwell upon the ability and disinterestedness, and the great though not entire success with which the advice thus given has been followed. The new leader of the Conservatives was not indeed able, perhaps was hardly desirous to restrain his followers from marking their sense of Peel's desertion of them by deserting him in their turn; though he has since confessed in his place in Parliament that their course at this time "savoured more of resentment than of "sound policy;"* and it is certainly impossible to avoid wishing that they had taken some other occasion to show this not very unnatural feeling than that which they did select. Full of indignation at the conduct of the minister, which they pronounced to be marked with the blackest treachery, they united with their most violent opponents to eject him from office, and even

* See Lord Derby's speech, April 4, 1859.—Hansard.

selected as the occasion on which to exhibit this unnatural union as necessary a Bill as was ever brought in by any Government, a coercion Bill for the repression of outrage and assassination in Ireland, which had been passed by the Peers almost unanimously. There was hardly much exaggeration in the Duke's statement that the state of society in that unhappy country was "worse "than it was in any of the wildest parts of Asia, Africa, "or America." And in fact the fearful character of the outrages which the Bill was intended to repress was not denied even by the Irish members; but, in spite of all considerations, the Conservatives united with the Irish and English Radicals to defeat it in order to turn out the Ministry, and by a singular coincidence they succeeded on the very same night that the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Law passed its third reading in the House of Lords.

Peel as well as the Duke had foreseen this defeat, and they had deliberated seriously on the conduct which it would be their duty to adopt in consequence; whether they should resign their offices, or dissolve Parliament and appeal to the country. Peel was of opinion that it was not possible to take this latter step on the mere question of personal confidence in the Ministry; but that it was necessary to make the appeal, if made at all, on some definite principle. The Duke, while* "he "confessed that he had no feeling upon the point on "which the Parliament should be dissolved," was quite willing as far as he was concerned to go to the country either on the question of personal confidence in the Ministry, or "on the single question of the Irish Assas-"sination Act;" and intimated an opinion that the ministers would be justified in dissolving the Parliament,

* Peel's Memoirs, ii., 288—302.

on the ground that "the Queen was desirous of retaining "ing her present advisers in her service." Peel however, from his opinion of the state of feeling generally existing throughout the country, doubted whether a fresh House of Commons would support him in carrying the necessary coercion Bill for Ireland; while both he and the Duke and the whole of the Cabinet agreed that unless they had reason to calculate confidently on a majority in a new House, the dissolution would be a step not to be justified; and accordingly the day after their defeat on the Irish Bill they resigned their offices, and a new Ministry was formed under the auspices of Lord John Russell.

CHAPTER LXII.

Wellington's government of the army—Increases its advantages—Diminishes corporal punishment—His views of the defensible state of the country—His value for the militia—The 10th of April, 1848—The law respecting public meetings—He supports the maintenance of the Lord-Lieutenancy of Ireland—The papal aggression—Divisions in the Government—The Queen consults the Duke—The Ministers resume office; are defeated—Lord Derby becomes Prime Minister.

WELLINGTON still retained his post of Commander-in-Chief; and the duties of that office, in which he at all times naturally took the greatest interest, at this time afforded him more than usual occupation. It was hardly to be expected that the army should entirely escape the desire for reform and alteration which had been carried into other departments of the State, and though he had no abstract love of reform in any established system, his eminent administrative capacity could not avoid constantly producing improvements in the details of any department under his superintendence. Before Peel quitted office the Duke had taken an opportunity of showing that, however he objected to soliciting what he considered in the light of unprofessional rewards, he was constantly on the watch to promote the efficiency of the army by securing to the deserving soldier a proper recognition of his merits; and he had procured the issue of a royal warrant establishing the

principle of granting gratuities and annuities to those privates and non-commissioned officers who had deserved such extraordinary marks of favour; giving them also increased pay, under the name of "good conduct pay," accompanied with visible badges to distinguish them from their comrades, and facilitating the terms on which such men might be allowed to purchase their discharge from the service. And in a similar spirit, in the following year he supported a Bill brought in by the ministers to limit the duration of military service, by a regulation under which the private soldier when enlisting should not, as he had previously done, bind himself to a longer period of service than ten or twelve years, at the expiration of which time it should be at his own option to renew his enlistment or to quit the army. Many officers of great experience and judgment opposed this regulation as calculated to deprive the country of its tried soldiers; but the Duke affirmed his disbelief in its being likely to produce such an effect. His estimate of the value of such troops was in no degree altered since he had commanded the army in the Peninsula; on the contrary, he still "maintained that they were absolutely necessary "to the very existence of the army. They," he said, "were the men who set the example, who maintained "discipline and good order, who put themselves at the "head of all great enterprises; they in short were the "men on whom the country must rely for the perform-"ance of those services which are required from an army "in time of peace as well as in war." He spoke of the whole army in terms of praise which, coming from such a man, must have warmed the heart of the youngest or meanest trooper in it, and which showed the sincere interest which he took in its credit. He referred not to the glorious deeds of his own veterans, all of whom had

now retired from the ranks, but to the extensive and important operations which had lately been carried on in every quarter of the globe by the existing army; and he told the Peers that those operations would have been impossible "if the country had not had the strictest "discipline and the best troops in the world, and that "discipline depended on the old soldiers of the different "regiments." If therefore he had believed that the measure before the House was calculated to deprive the service prematurely of its veterans, he would have been the last man to consent to it; but he assured his hearers that many of its clauses were framed at his own suggestion, and that it was his firm belief that at the end of the first period of ten or twelve years' service the best men would gladly re-enlist; while he expressed a further hope that some of the clauses, coupled with the provisions respecting pensions and rewards contained in the royal warrant of the preceding year, would gradually lead to a discharge from the army being considered as a punishment.

One of his great objects was to improve the moral feeling of the men with respect to other punishments; and about this time he issued an order greatly diminishing the amount of corporal punishment which it should be lawful to inflict. A vehement outcry had been for many years raised by a small party against the infliction of the lash in any case, and petitions were from time to time presented to Parliament, praying for its abolition; but that the Duke strenuously resisted, though he affirmed that it "had long been the wish of all those "connected with the command of the army, and par-"ticularly of the Duke of York, when he was Com-"mander-in-Chief, that the punishment should be "diminished in the greatest possible degree." For

himself he said that "ever since he had first commanded "a regiment it had been the object of all his arrange- "ments to diminish the punishment, so as if possible "to lead to its entire discontinuance. But at present "he declared it to be absolutely impossible to carry on "the discipline of the army without some punishment "of that description." He reminded his hearers that when a few years ago a Governor-General of India had issued an order to forbid its infliction, it had soon been found necessary to re-establish it, because "the troops "among whom it had been abolished had mutinied in "the most remarkable and disgraceful manner." He again took occasion to praise the general conduct of the army in the most enthusiastic terms; and avowed his hope that even he might live to see the day when corporal punishment might be abolished with safety to the discipline of the service, and therefore to the country; but the time was not come yet.

But it was not to the empty expression of his wishes that he trusted, but rather to the encouragement of a general system of education in the army, which the Government were beginning to adopt at his recommendation; and which he (having in his own campaigns experienced how greatly the good conduct of a regiment depended upon the intelligence of its officers) himself soon carried upwards into the ranks of the officers, by establishing an admirable regulation under which every candidate for a commission was required to pass an examination before a military board; thus laying the foundation of a system which has been extended since his death, and which is already producing valuable fruit, by diffusing among all branches of the service a degree of scientific skill which was formerly almost confined to the artillery and engineers. His desire to improve

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the condition of the army at this time was stimulated by very serious apprehensions which he entertained, that if we should become involved in war with any enemy capable of invading the country our means of defending ourselves would be found totally inadequate. And these apprehensions of his acquired a notoriety which he himself would probably have been far from desiring, by the unauthorized publication of a letter which he wrote on the subject to the Inspector-General of Fortifications, Sir John Burgoyne. He was quite aware, as he had on one occasion stated in the House of Lords, that it was "unpalatable to a British House of "Parliament to consider in time of peace what is neces- "sary in a period of warfare;" and therefore he never volunteered any public declaration of his fears. But when Sir John, whose attention had been attracted by a boastful pamphlet full of the bitterest feelings towards this country written by the French Prince de Joinville, had in consequence sent him a paper of observations on the possible result of a war between this country and France, Wellington in reply laid before him without reserve the whole of his forebodings; and, very fortunately, since the bad faith of some one to whom the letter was communicated made them public, he at the same time explained his idea of the means proper to be taken to put the country in a defensible position; and showed that they were clearly within her power. And it is worth notice that these means were the same with those in the adoption of which he supported Lord Derby's Administration in the very last speech which he ever delivered.

In this most remarkable letter he did not cast more blame on the existing Government than on its predecessor. He asserted as an undeniable fact, that the

application of steam to maritime operations had rendered us assailable on all parts of our coast; and that while those coasts were, as was well known, almost wholly unfortified, they were at the same time almost destitute of troops. But he stated that he had represented this fact to successive Administrations in vain; for that all had been alike deaf to his warnings and to his advice. While pondering on the possibility of an attempt being made to invade us, "he had," he said, "reconnoitred "our whole south-eastern coast over and over again;" and the result of his examination was, that "excepting "immediately under the fire of Dover Castle, there was "not a spot where infantry would find any difficulty "in landing; while there were also many small har- "bours or mouths of rivers each without defence, of "which an enemy having thus landed might take posses "sion, and so establish his communications with France." As a soldier he pronounced that there was "no mode "of protection from this danger except by an army "in the field capable of meeting that enemy, aided by "all the means of fortification which experience in war "can suggest." And yet the whole force to be found in the two islands "would not be found sufficient, if war "should break out, for the mere defence and occupation "of the works constructed for the defence of our dock- "yards and naval arsenals, without leaving a single "man disposable." Nor was this weakness at home counterbalanced by strength abroad. On the contrary, in his last speech to which allusion has already been made, though delivered five years later, he complained that "we had not for many years had in the regular "army more men than enough to relieve the sentries "on duty at our stations in the different parts of the "world." Such a defenceless state he considered almost

invited attack, and if attack should come and find us still so unprotected, even if shame did not forbid it, could we rely upon our allies for succour? "When," he asked in words that deserve to be imperishably engraved on the memory of the rulers of every country, "when did any man hear of the allies of a country "which was unable to defend herself?"

Not that there was any need to despair, or to distrust the resources of the kingdom if they were properly employed. There was an old constitutional force in existence, dormant indeed but not extinguished, the militia; and it was that force which of late he had repeatedly, he said, begged succeeding Administrations to embody and discipline. The militia, organized as it had been during the war, would amount to nearly one hundred and fifty thousand men, and with them and a very small augmentation of the regular army, "he "himself, old as he was, would engage for the defence "of the country. Many, he was aware, would deem "him foolhardy in undertaking such a charge with an "army of militia; and he did not deny that he should "prefer and feel more confidence in regular troops; "but," as he explained to Burgoyne, "regular troops he "knew that he could not get," while of obtaining militia he still cherished some hope; and now, as in Spain, he was prepared to do his best with what materials were at his disposal. Writing to a soldier he had no need to dilate on the value of militia; but when speaking to the Peers, whose unprofessional ignorance led many of them unduly to depreciate them, he bore honourable testimony to the merits of such a force drawn from his own experience. He told them that "in the last war he had had great experience of the "value of several regiments of English militia," and he

declared that "they had been in as high a state of dis-
"cipline and as fit for service as any men he had ever
"seen in his life even among her Majesty's regular
"troops." He described too the gallantry shown by several regiments of Hanoverian militia at Waterloo, "that battle of giants;" and from the state of efficiency to which they were brought at that time, he argued that a similar force now might soon be rendered capable of performing all the service required of it; while even if unhappily war should break out before it was fully disciplined, it would still "be fit for some service, and "would enable us to employ in the field others who "were more fit." In fact, such a force would be in every respect "an efficient auxiliary to the regular army."

If his advice was not taken at the moment, yet it did not fall altogether fruitless to the ground. Soon after his death the Russian war, by requiring the services of our regular troops in foreign lands, compelled the Government to embody the militia throughout the kingdom; retired officers of experience willingly accepted commissions in the regiments so called out, country gentlemen of standing and property joined them in placing their services at the disposal of their country, and laboured with such zeal to learn the duties of their new profession, that many of them speedily became almost as worthy holders of commissions as their more regularly trained comrades. By their exertions the force was soon raised to such a pitch of discipline and efficiency that the authorities were not afraid to entrust even some of our foreign settlements to its protection; while, whether at home or abroad, the different regiments displayed a general spirit of subordination and good conduct that raised them high in the esteem of the inhabitants of every place where they were stationed. That war was

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soon terminated, but though it had mingled so much of suffering and sorrow with its glory that the latter might well seem to have been dearly purchased, it was so far useful to the country that it re-awakened the nation to a sense of its own strength, and at the same time to the necessity of being always better prepared to exert it, than the aggressions of Russia had found us at the outset. And since that time, the troubled state of Europe having given additional force to that warning, our rulers have to a great extent acted upon Wellington's advice in maintaining that militia which he valued so highly, in augmenting the regular army, and in strengthening our fleet and our defences of every kind to such a degree that if any enemy should become hardy or desperate enough to attack us, we may be sure that we shall not want allies as being unable to defend ourselves; and, if happily the knowledge and sight of our strength shall lead to the preservation of peace, still while we repose in thankful security under the guardianship of our augmented forces, let us remember whose timely wisdom it was that first pointed out to us the necessity for such precautions, and acknowledge that he, whose courage and skill championed us so successfully while living, now that he is dead still speaketh for the maintenance of our safety and our honour.

In one memorable instance he was destined once more himself to save the country from what to many seemed, certainly not wholly without reason, a very serious danger. The revolutionary spirit, commonly known as Chartism, had of late years spread to a very formidable extent through many districts of the kingdom; and its leaders gathered so much courage from the French revolution of 1848 that they prepared a petition to Parliament in favour of their political views which was very

numerously signed, though not by a quarter of the number of persons whom its concocters stated to have affixed their names to it; and that they also ventured to give public notice of their intention to assemble on the 10th of April in a vast body on Kennington Common, and from thence to march in procession to the House of Commons where a Member of Parliament had agreed to present their petition, and, backed by the presence of their overpowering host, to require the House to take it into instant consideration. Many of them also entertained the idea of overthrowing the Government by force, and of establishing a Republic and a Provisional Government on the French model. This design was of course not openly avowed, but enough was proclaimed to convince the ministers of the dangerous character of the intended assemblage, and of the impropriety of permitting it to take place. Accordingly they gave official notice to the public that the proposed procession would be illegal, being in violation of an express Act of Parliament which forbade any number of persons exceeding ten at any time to proceed to the Houses of Parliament to present any address or petition; and at the same time (since it was far from improbable that, unless it were backed by something stronger than words, their proclamation might be but little regarded) they applied to the Duke to protect the metropolis from any formidable disturbance by such means as he could employ in his military capacity. It was a novel duty that the veteran was thus called upon to perform; it was also a most difficult and delicate one. It was impossible to tell what the real numbers of the Chartists were, but it was not doubted that they were very considerable: a hasty movement might produce a riot, a riot might develop itself into an insurrection; and if

such a disaster should ensue, who could forget that twice within the last twenty years had the French army under the command of its most experienced marshals proved unable to save their metropolis from extensive bloodshed and conflagration, the throne of their King from overthrow, and his family from exile?

Such events might swell an insurrection into civil war; and we have more than once seen in the course of this work the horror which Wellington had expressed of such war as the most miserable of all human calamities. With cheerfulness and zeal did he apply himself to the task set before him of averting such horrors. The charge committed to him was not unlike that which ancient Rome sometimes imposed upon her consuls in times of her worst perils, "To see that the common-" wealth suffered no injury." For many centuries that commission was never given in vain. But no Roman consul ever executed his charge with such consummate judgment, such complete and bloodless success. The object which he proposed to himself was not to put down an outbreak, but to prevent one from taking place. With this view though he brought up a great number of troops from different parts of the country to London, and posted them in such parts of the town as seemed most likely to be exposed to or most calculated to invite violence, he yet kept them completely concealed, lest the sight of them should provoke the angry passions of any mob by the appearance of premeditated hostility. The Bank and the different public offices were all filled with troops amply provided with artillery, whose presence though suspected was unseen; other large buildings were hired for the same purpose, and similarly garrisoned; steamers were prepared to transport regiments and guns along the river to any place where their

presence might be needed, so as to avoid as far as possible the necessity of marching the men through the narrow and crowded streets; while in the hope of more completely averting all necessity for the active use of such irresistible military resources, a vast body of special constables, amounting to above a hundred and fifty thousand men, was enrolled, sufficient to show the Chartist leaders if they should be disposed to listen to the voice of reason, that the affections of the people in general were as clearly on the side of the Government as the obedience of the soldiers. The Duke himself with a sufficient staff occupied his office at the Horse Guards, ready, though now nearly eighty years of age, at once to hasten to any spot where his presence might be required. The admirable precautions thus taken succeeded most completely. Not one sword was required to be drawn from its sheath, nor one trigger to be pulled. In spite of all their previous boasting the Chartist leaders feared to provoke an encounter with a force the magnitude of which was perhaps enhanced in their eyes by its invisibility; and, submitting to the order of a Commissioner of Police, dissolved their assembly, the meeting of which, in a manner very contrary to their design, had strengthened the Government by covering themselves with ridicule, and showing how vast in this kingdom was the majority of the well affected loyal and orderly citizens over the favourers of riot and revolution. Nor was Wellington content with having thus by his personal exertions averted any disturbance for a time, but he gave his hearty support to a measure shortly afterwards introduced by the Government to effect such improvements in the law affecting large meetings of such a character as that on Kennington Common, as should render it easier to

prevent them and to punish their promoters in future. And in his speech on the subject he pointed out with an earnestness which showed that he deeply felt the importance of the statement which he was making, that there no longer appeared to be that respect for the law among the people in general which had formerly existed. He reminded the House that in 1831, when most formidable riots had been excited at Bristol, a single squadron of dragoons had been found sufficient to quell them; but now he complained that that spirit had passed away, and that the law when unsupported by physical force was treated with open contempt. He dwelt especially on the lawless spirit existing in Ireland, where monster meetings, collected with the avowed object of effecting the separation between the two kingdoms, were continually held with impunity in spite of the proclamations declaring their illegal character which had been issued by the Government; and where some individuals of respectable station,* while actually under bail to stand their trial on charges of sedition, had openly gone to France to endeavour to negotiate for a French invasion of their country. He therefore entreated the House to pass the Bill, finding fault with it only because it did not go far enough, since, as far as it affected Ireland, it only authorized the Lord-Lieutenant to proceed upon evidence given on oath; while he himself would have preferred seeing that magistrate empowered to act upon his own discretion.

Not that Wellington was now or ever an enemy to fair discussion; on the contrary, while insisting thus strongly on the mischievous character of these "monster "meetings," he expressly added that "he desired that "the people should have the means of public discussion on

* Mr. Smith O'Brien and his accomplices.

"every subject on which they wished to have discussion." But what he objected to was the practice of meeting in such numbers that those present could not possibly hear what was said; when discussion was a pretence, and the assemblage was in fact only intended "to create "terror and to overawe the Government." It was apparently very much from his desire to have an officer at all times in Ireland invested with such power as he had recommended the Government to entrust to the Lord-Lieutenant that he objected so strongly to a Bill brought in by the ministers, the idea of which has been renewed since his time, of abolishing that office. And his observations on the subject certainly went to show that such a measure could not be adopted with safety until Ireland should be in a state of tranquillity civil and political, which it cannot be said to have hitherto made much progress in attaining. In his view we had little more than military occupation of a great part of the country: "If we looked at the history of the last "fifty years, and more especially at that of the last ten "years in Ireland, we should find," he said, "a continued "series of military operations at every period of time, "while such operations, according to the British con-"stitution, could not be carried on except under the "sanction of the civil power, not," that is to say, "with-"out the superintending direction and assistance of the "Lord-Lieutenant." And he referred to the constant communication which he as Commander-in-Chief had found it absolutely indispensable to keep up with that officer while deliberating on the measures requisite for putting an end to the monster meetings in Ireland, to prove the necessity of maintaining such a resident governor in that country. Were there no resident Lord-Lieutenant, the chief civil authority in different districts

would, as he truly pointed out, be vested in many cases in persons with whom any such communication on the part of the Government as he had referred to would be not only objectionable but impracticable; such persons for instance as Mr. O'Connell, whom many of the Peers had lately seen at Court in the robes of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, while he was the very chief instigator of the lawless proceedings and seditious designs which it was the duty and the object of the Government to frustrate and to put down.

With practical sagacity he pointed out how inferior in its effect any power conferred upon a Secretary of State must be to that thus beneficially exercised under the present establishment. One especial difference he pointed out, "that a Secretary of State would but con-"vey the commands of the Sovereign; an Under Secre-"tary of State, resident in Dublin, as the advocates for "the abolition of the lord-lieutenancy proposed, would "only convey the commands of the Secretary of State; "but that a Lord-Lieutenant issued his own commands; "having that power by law, by patents, by usage, by "prescription," and therefore "he begged the Lords "to reflect whether it would be expedient, for the sake "of some paltry economy, to remove from a country "in such a state of constant disturbance as Ireland "was then in, had been in, and possibly might continue "to be in for some time, the authority which was "requisite to put down this state of disturbance by "taking advantage of every favourable opportunity to "secure tranquillity."

It was perhaps very much in deference to his arguments that the measure, after having been agreed to by the Commons, was finally abandoned; and, as it is probable that such a proposal may be repeated it would

certainly be well if those entrusted with the chief direction of our affairs would weigh them well before sanctioning the abolition of an office the objections to which rest principally on theory, while in practice it has been pronounced by a man of such vast administrative talent to be productive of advantages for which he could see no substitute.

Regarding the return of a Conservative Government to power as an event which, however desirable, still, in the total disruption of that party consequent on the repeal of the Corn Laws could not be expected for some years, he gave an almost uninterrupted support to Lord John Russell's Administration upon his old principle of upholding the Queen's Government; being also greatly influenced by the consideration that in the unsettled state of affairs existing upon the continent of Europe, it was of great consequence "that nothing should be done to throw the "smallest difficulty or impediment in the way of the "Government in carrying on our foreign relations, and "that no step should be taken which could give occasion "for the slightest grounds for the belief that the Govern-"ment was not supported by the public opinion of this "country."* Actuated by these views he often even opposed the wishes of his own friends; as when soon after the accession of the ministers to office Lord Stanley attacked their foreign policy and their armed interference in the affairs of Portugal after the insurgents against the Queen's authority had refused our friendly mediation, and had rejected the very favourable terms which we had succeeded in procuring for them, the Duke on the contrary defended the ministers, arguing that, though it was our fixed and wise rule, whatever party might be at the head of our affairs, not to interfere in the settlement

* See his speech on the address, February 1, 1849.

of the Governments of other countries, yet we had at all times "shown a special concern in the preservation "of their internal tranquillity;" and that such conduct on our part was justified by the "most important "interests which connected us with every country on "the face of the globe." He even avowed a pride in believing "that it was impossible for a British am- "bassador or a British minister to exist in any country "without exerting a most important and predominant "influence in maintaining tranquillity in that country, "and even great influence over its society; and that "power and influence it was his duty vigilantly to exert "with the object of giving stability to the Government "of the State to which he was accredited." Indeed he traced many disturbances which had recently taken place in Portugal to the fact that England had not of late interfered sufficiently; and if our interference in the manner which he spoke of was justifiable any- where, he maintained, as it was very natural for him who had himself once played so important a part in securing the tranquillity of Portugal to maintain, that our old relations with that country especially required us to "exercise our friendly influence in preserving quiet, "order, and good government in that country." Nor was he contented with laying down this general prin- ciple, but he went farther in this particular instance, and argued that the fact of our Government having been accepted by the Queen of Portugal as the mediator between her and her rebellious subjects, justified us in sending a naval force to that country, since every "mediator, as such, must be possessed of some degree "of naval or military power to sustain his guarantees." He also approved highly of our having admitted France and Spain to be partners in the mediation which we

had thus undertaken, since "the independence of Por-"tugal would be better secured by there being a "number of mediators." His arguments and authority prevailed with the House, and the resolutions which Lord Stanley had proposed were rejected. His own object in recommending and supporting the line of policy which he thus defended was evidently the maintenance of peace; and those who recollect how frequently internal disturbances in any country have involved it in foreign war, and how apt war, when once begun, is to draw other nations into its gulf besides those which originally commenced it, will surely approve the principle which he here laid down, that in every way the influence of our Government at home and of our ambassadors abroad should be exerted to maintain the stability of the Governments existing in foreign countries.

He also vigorously supported the Bill brought in by the ministers in 1851 on the occasion of the Pope having taken upon himself in the autumn of the preceding year to parcel out England into a number of dioceses for Roman Catholic prelates; and having nominated the person who boasted of having been the real author of this ill-advised proceeding, Cardinal Wiseman, Archbishop of Westminster, the very city which contained the palace of the British Sovereign and the seat of the British Legislature. The indignation excited throughout the kingdom at this singular piece of presumption was so great that it would have been almost impossible for any Cabinet to have refrained from noticing it; addresses from almost every county and town in England had been presented on the subject to the Queen, who had received them with undisguised favour and approbation, and who had further in her

Speech on opening Parliament alluded to the Pope's act as "one which had excited strong feelings in this "country." To deprive the papal bull of its effect, and to prevent any repetition of such insolence, the ministers at the earliest moment brought in a Bill to forbid under heavy penalties Roman Catholic priests to assume territorial titles derived from any place in the United Kingdom, and to prohibit for the future all publication of any papal bull or manifesto. The erection of these papal bishoprics had not been universally approved even by the Roman Catholics; and one Peer of that persuasion, Lord Camoys, openly condemned it in the House of Lords. Many statesmen however of dignity and weight objected to the ministerial measure; and Lord Aberdeen moved its rejection, on the ground that it bore the stamp of persecution, and went beyond the legitimate power of the State; arguing that, if we denied the Roman Catholic Church a regular government, we could no longer be said to tolerate that Church. He treated the assumption of territorial titles by the new bishops as a trifle beneath our notice, contending that "they must be described somehow;" and maintained that the Bill proposed by the ministers was an outrage on the feelings of one-third of the people of the United Kingdom. It is plain that his most forcible argument, that bishops such as were appointed by the Pope's bull were necessary to the regular government of the Roman Catholic Church in England was invalidated by the fact that for nearly three hundred years that Church had been efficiently and with the consent of its adherents governed without any such establishment. One or two other Peers adopted Lord Aberdeen's argument; but, without descending to examine minutely the details of the papal measure, the Duke unhesitatingly avowed

his approval of the ministerial Bill on broad grounds. He referred to his own conduct in 1829 as a proof that he was not disposed to view the Roman Catholics with unfriendly or jealous eyes; and he avowed his wish still to be that they should enjoy every means of following their religion with perfect freedom. But he could not look upon this "appointment of a papal "hierarchy" in this Protestant kingdom as being at all necessary for such an end; he declared that he had viewed it with "alarm and great concern;" he also reminded the House of an address which Cardinal Wiseman had published on entering upon his new duties, in which he gratuitously sneered at the Dean and Chapter of Westminster as anxious only for their stately Abbey with its adjoining parks and royal palaces, seeking to point a contrast between their worldly ambition and the humility to be displayed by himself, who desired as his sphere of action, only "the concealed "labyrinth of lanes and courts, nests of ignorance, vice, "depravity, and crime, as well as of squalor, wretched-"ness, and disease;"* and he declared that when he viewed the Pope's conduct in connection with this undeserved attack on the Dean and Chapter it was impossible to avoid seeing in it "the old object of antagonism to "the Established Church of this country," and that since such was its character "it was absolutely im-"possible to pass it over without having recourse to "some fresh act of legislation." He looked upon himself as personally concerned in the carrying of the ministerial Bill since, if it failed, "he must give his "consent to certain alterations of the terms of the "Relief Act" of 1829; since he, and those who joined

* See the 'Times,' Nov. 20, 1850, which contains the cardinal's manifesto at full length.

him in bringing forward that great measure had "repeatedly declared that nothing contained in it touched "the laws on which the Reformation was founded," and they were now bound to uphold the correctness of that statement.

Besides the indignation which he felt at the conduct of the Pope and at the language of the Cardinal on this occasion, Wellington had another motive for supporting the ministers at this time, since he himself had just been the cause of their continuing in power; under circumstances which conveyed to himself the most extraordinary compliment that any public man ever received. The Administration, having owed their accession to power to divisions among the Conservatives rather than to any opinion of their talents or esteem for their characters, had never been strong; divisions and mutual jealousies, which were not kept very secret, were beginning to render it weaker; when, shortly after the opening of Parliament in 1851, having narrowly escaped defeat on one important question, they were beaten very decisively on another, and resigned their offices. It was presently found that so complete was the disorganization of parties which had been brought about by the events of the last five years, that the formation of any Administration at all was a matter of extreme difficulty. Lord Stanley, to whom, as the leader of the Conservatives, the Queen in the first instance applied, declined the commission proposed to him on the ground that it was one which he could not as yet hope to execute successfully; Lord Aberdeen as the head of the small party attached to Peel's memory and policy was next applied to, and he too declared his inability to comply with the commands of his Royal mistress. Lord John Russell then tried to reconstruct

his Cabinet, strengthening it by the introduction of some new members and by the exclusion of some of his former colleagues, but this attempt also failed; and for a day or two the country was without any Government whatever; a condition of affairs which by the Queen's authority Lord Lansdowne and Lord John Russell announced to their respective Houses of Parliament, coupled with the statement that her Majesty "desired to obtain the advice in this unforeseen con-"tingency of a noble and illustrious Duke, to whom "on other occasions she had referred in moments of "difficulty."*

Wellington as usual placed his counsels at the disposal of his Sovereign: in his practical eyes the case before him was simplified by Lord Stanley's and Lord Aberdeen's refusals of office; and when three days afterwards the ministers announced that they had resumed their posts, they were commanded by their Sovereign to declare that she had been led to decide on retaining them in her service by the express advice of the Duke of Wellington.

No Administration however replaced on such grounds could be expected to last long; the jealousies between the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary grew more violent and more notorious. Before the end of the year Lord John Russell deprived Lord Palmerston of the seals of the Foreign Office on grounds which were generally held to be trifling and insufficient; and at the beginning of the next session Lord Palmerston retaliated by defeating the Ministry on an insignificant matter about the militia, which however the Prime Minister chose to treat as a question of confidence in his Government. He consequently a second time

* Lord Lansdowne, February 28, 1851.

resigned his office, and Lord Stanley, who in consequence of the death of his father had recently become Earl of Derby, had now no difficulty in forming a Government.

The Duke had supported Lord John Russell's Ministry to the last moment, especially aiding them with his advice as to the Kaffir war, which the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, had the wisdom properly to appreciate, in compliance with his suggestions ordering roads to be made into the interior of the country with a view to facilitate the transport of troops; and adopting other measures which he recommended. Still true to his Conservative principles, he rejoiced to see Lord John give place to a Minister whom he had anxiously and approvingly watched following out with patient judgment the advice which he had given him six years before. The only occasion however on which he spoke in his support was in recommendation of the measure which has been before alluded to, of increasing the militia —a measure which he earnestly recommended "as the "commencement of a completion of a peace establish- "ment, which would not only give us a constitutional "force; but, though it might not at first nor even for "some time be all that could be wished, would by "degrees become an efficient auxiliary force to the "regular army."

CHAPTER LXIII.

Death of Wellington—His funeral—His military character—His political character.

WITH the exception of a motion for some parliamentary papers these were the last words ever addressed by Wellington to the senate of his country. For many years he had been subject to severe attacks which had caused his friends alarm at the time, and, though during the long intervals which elapsed between them, there was even less diminution of his bodily vigour or mental acuteness perceptible than might have been expected from his age, yet undoubtedly each successive seizure impaired his strength, and rendered him less equal to encounter another. Towards the end of August 1852 he went down as usual to Walmer, apparently in wonderful health for a man of his age; and on the 13th of September he was remarked to be in unusually high spirits, as he was examining his horses and making preparations for the reception of some visitors who were expected the next day. Those visitors he was not destined to receive. The next morning his servant on entering his room found him complaining of oppression on the chest; which in spite of instant medical attention became rapidly worse, till it assumed the appearance of an epileptic fit. All remedies proved unavailing,

and after remaining about six hours in a state of speechless insensibility he expired at about a quarter after three in the afternoon without a struggle; dying indeed so peacefully that the exact moment when his life departed could not be perceived, and it was only by holding a looking-glass to his lips that it could be ascertained that he had ceased to exist.

He had completed his eighty-third year in the preceding spring, and to one of such an age death could not have been unexpected, even if no account be taken of the changes of climate to which he had been exposed, and of the unremitting labour with which for nearly three-fourths of his life he had devoted himself to the service of his country. Yet for a moment the suddenness of his loss struck the people in general with as heavy a grief as if such an event had been wholly unforeseen. It was not only that, feeble as he was, something of safety seemed to be taken from the national arms and the national councils; but he had filled so large a space in the eyes of every one, and the long habit of respect and confidence had begotten so much personal regard for him, that even those who had never had the least acquaintance with him seemed as if they had lost a friend, and felt something of the sorrow with which the death of those to whom we have been long attached strikes even the most insensible. With admirable taste and judgment Lord Derby gave opportunity for a full display of the national feeling, announcing by a letter to the Home Secretary written at Balmoral, whither he had gone to take the Queen's pleasure on the subject, that "though her Majesty might by her own authority have "given immediate orders for a public funeral; yet, "anxious that this tribute of gratitude and of sorrow "should be deprived of nothing that could invest it

" with a thoroughly national character, anxious that " the greatest possible number of her subjects should " have an opportunity of joining it, she was anxious " above all things that such honours should not appear " to emanate from the Crown alone; and that the two " Houses of Parliament should have an opportunity, " by their previous sanction, of stamping the proposed " ceremony with increased solemnity, and of associating " themselves with her Majesty in paying honour to the " memory of one whom no Englishman could name " without pride and sorrow."

Parliament however, which had lately been dissolved, was not to meet for two months, and during that time Wellington's honoured remains continued at Walmer under the protection of an honorary guard of the Rifle Brigade. At last in the middle of November the Queen opened Parliament, and the first sentence of her speech was devoted to the expression of her " deep sorrow that " its deliberations could no longer be aided by the " counsels of that illustrious man whose great achieve- " ments had exalted the name of England, and in whose " loyalty and patriotism the interests of her throne " and of her people had ever found an unfailing sup- " port; and of her confidence that it would desire to " join with her in taking such steps as might mark " its sense of the irreparable loss which the country had " sustained by the death of Arthur Duke of Wellington."

Speakers of all ranks and parties in both Houses vied with one another in approval of the measures proposed to be taken, and in praise of the military and civil genius and virtues of the deceased warrior and statesman. By an unprecedented act of legislation the day appointed for the funeral was placed in the metropolis on the footing of Sunday, so that all business was to be

suspended; and then the preparations for the mournful ceremony were carried forward without interruption. The body had already been brought up from Walmer to Chelsea, where in the noble hall of that royal hospital it lay in state for four days, and was visited by hundreds of thousands, who, undeterred by the most tempestuous weather, and undismayed by fearful accidents caused by the vast crowds thus brought together, pressed on in one huge unceasing stream to pay the last mark of respect to their heroic countryman. Who that made his way into that lofty chamber can forget the solemn magnificence of the spectacle there presented to his view? The black hangings rendered more awful by "the dim religious light" feebly cast around by the huge tapers; the silent motionless grenadiers; the field-marshals' staves, the countless orders of knighthood, the coronets and banners, emblems of more military and civil rank and dignities than had ever in the world been won by the same individual; and in the midst of these badges of honour the splendid coffin holding the lifeless remains now insensible to rank and dignity, and even to the grief with which his countrymen gazed on those trappings and that coffin, proclaiming in language more eloquent than mortal voice the fleeting nature of all earthly honours, the perishable vanity of all human glory.

More imposing and solemn still was the scene on the 18th of November, the day appointed for the funeral. The coffin had been previously transferred from Chelsea to the Horse Guards; and in the square in front of that building was gathered one end of the most vast and imposing procession ever witnessed in these islands. No class in Britain, and scarcely any country in Europe, was unrepresented at this last scene in the human

career of him whom all countries had formerly acknowledged as their deliverer. Soldiers from every regiment in the kingdom, and envoys sent for that special occasion from foreign nations, led the way through the densest crowd ever witnessed even in London; while, as they passed in front of the royal palace, the Queen herself (acknowledging by her deep mourning, which no British Sovereign had ever before worn for a subject, that he whose deeds had eclipsed those of kings might well claim an equality with the proudest blood of royalty) gazed with unaffected grief and unrestrained tears on the splendid but mournful pageant. On first receiving the intelligence of his death, her decision had been that he should be laid by the side of Nelson, that mightiest* and most beloved of sailors, who had nearly half a century before been borne with similar honours to his rest beneath the lofty dome of St. Paul's, and in that noble cathedral the remains of Wellington were now to repose. For four long hours did the procession make its slow and solemn way through the streets, along the whole length of which every pavement, every window and doorway that could command a view of it was blocked up by a dense multitude, whose reverential silence best testified to the reality and depth of their sorrow. And when in the cathedral itself the most gallant and honoured of his old comrades clustered around the grave, the bravest of them all were not ashamed to bedew the descending coffin with manly tears, in grateful recollection of their long friendship, of the glories which he had won for them, and by his example had taught them to win for themselves and for their common country.

* "Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell."—Campbell's Ode, 'Ye mariners of England.'

Thus have I endeavoured to give some account of the chief incidents in the life of one who was before the eyes of the world for a longer period than has yet been granted to any other public man in the history not only of England but of Europe. From the day when he was first appointed to important command as Governor of Mysore to that of his death is a period of above half a century; and during no inconsiderable portion of that time not only his outward actions but his secret objects, his views, and his opinions have been laid before us by his own consent with a minuteness and particularity which few would have permitted, while fewer still could have stood the test of the scrutiny into them thus placed in the power of the whole world.

A French proverb which has been copied into more than one language imports that the state robes which set off the power and magnificence of celebrated men, usually serve also to conceal stains of imperfection, sometimes even of littleness, which will not bear to be beheld by the world in general, and which greatly detract from their reputation in the eyes of those to whom such defects are of necessity revealed. Accordingly by ordinary minds their inmost aspirations and feelings and motives are kept carefully out of sight, and our notions of them are consequently such as they have desired that we should entertain rather than those which the facts would justify if we could really attain to the knowledge of them. But the perfect openness and sincerity of Wellington's nature revolted at any such compromise with truth. His magnanimity desired not only posterity, but (what to most men would be a harder trial) his contemporaries also to know him as he was; and they will be acting most in accordance with his wishes who form or aid others to form an

impartial judgment of his character; not with blind admiration or injudicious flattery (though admiration of the illustrious dead is at least an excusable flattery) disguising his defects or his faults, but, remembering that he also was mortal, balancing them against his virtues and his services, and giving to either only that preponderance to which they may seem to be justly entitled.

As a soldier he requires no effort at favourable construction, no allowance for shortcomings. If, without instituting a comparison between him and any rival in glory, we look solely at the military excellences displayed by the Duke, it will be difficult to find one quality requisite to make up the character of a great commander which he had not in perfection. Sometimes he displayed the most brilliant audacity; which at the same time was ever regulated by the most consummate professional skill; so as, whether directed to scatter the barbaric but intrepid legions of Scindiah at Assye, or to surprise the experienced veterans of Soult at Oporto, to be equally certain of success. Sometimes he exhibited the most immovable patience, which nevertheless when exerted by him was so judiciously timed that, amid all its seeming inertness, it led him as certainly to the objects which he desired to attain as the most resolute activity. As a strategist he not only showed himself capable in 1813 of planning a single campaign so admirably that in the long period of ten months not one of his designs failed, but even in 1809, when possessed of far less experience, he sketched out not one but an entire series of campaigns; and, though he stood alone in Europe in his opinion, predicted the issue of the whole war with a prophetic accuracy. As a tactician, at Salamanca, at Orthes, and at Waterloo, he gave examples of a mastery of that branch of military

science which has never been equalled; whether in taking instant advantage of the errors of one antagonist, or, by an instantaneous brilliancy of conception, baffling the skilful designs and overthrowing the well-founded hopes of another; or in anticipating and counteracting every plan and attempt of the last and greatest of his foes.

Why in an enumeration of his military exploits should we forbear to mention that most truly glorious of all, the noble example which he set of humanizing war, sparing the unfortunate inhabitants of the countries which were its seat as far as lay in his power, and, even when in the territories of the enemy, drawing a careful distinction between the soldiers and the citizens? War, always terrible, had never been more mercilessly waged than by Napoleon and his lieutenants, most of whom added bloodthirsty and wanton cruelty to the most shameless rapacity, plundering all who had any property, destroying what they could not carry off, and often murdering those who had nothing to be robbed of. We have seen how different was the conduct which Wellington enforced upon his army; and, when we look at the extent to which the rigid order which he maintained facilitated his operations, both by securing the constant efficiency of his own troops, and by conciliating the people of the districts in which they were quartered, not only must we admire his just and virtuous humanity, but we may also say that such virtues so practised had many of the attributes as well as the effects of genius.

If we compare him with Napoleon, with whom, as his contemporary and antagonist, a comparison seems in some degree to be forced upon us; while we follow the military career of the French Emperor with well-deserved admiration; while in the rising splendour of

his Italian victories, in the meridian glories of Austerlitz and Jena, and still in the heroic efforts with which he at last strove to expel, and did so long dismay and so often defeat the overpowering hosts of the invaders of his empire, we recognize the courage and fortitude and skill and genius of an heroic warrior, of a profound commander, we may yet ask which of his victories was more splendid than Salamanca, more decisive than Waterloo?—when he executed a more brilliant surprise of his enemies than that of Oporto? when he invaded a foreign territory with greater grandeur and with more irresistible success than Wellington when he gave a fresh interpretation to the boast of Louis XIV., that there were no longer any Pyrenees, and, breaking through that mighty barrier, forced a way for his army to the soil of France?

If, turning from the exploits themselves, we contemplate the favourable circumstances, or on the other hand the difficulties under which they were achieved, it is plain that the advantage is wholly on the side of Wellington. Napoleon was aided by a staff of lieutenants, all having the most extensive experience, and many the most brilliant military talents; the Duke's lieutenants had, till the beginning of the Peninsular war, scarcely any experience, and with the exception of Hill and one or two others, few high military qualities except unflinching courage. Napoleon wielded at will the entire civil and military power of a vast, warlike, and wealthy kingdom; Wellington was dependent for all his means of action on a Government for the most part divided and feeble, and embarrassed by a vigorous and unscrupulous Opposition; so that at no moment of all his campaigns had he a force at all adequate to the performance of the tasks required of it;

and he was encumbered and perplexed and deceived by the most worthless allies that ever baffled the designs or betrayed the hopes of a commander. Napoleon again, brilliant as were his triumphs, gained them over adversaries of no very splendid capacity. The most formidable of his antagonists, Blucher, Kutusoff, Barclay de Tolly, and even the Archduke Charles, however profoundly he may have been versed in the theory of his profession, cannot be rated higher than the second class of generals; while those to whom Wellington was opposed, even before he encountered Napoleon himself, were the very French marshals to whom every other opponent had proved inferior. Marmont, Ney, Soult, and Massena were men who had never before met an equal in the fight; but, with many others, they all proved wholly unequal, to cope with Wellington, to whom at last even their imperial master, in spite of the superior quality of the greater part of his troops at Waterloo, was forced to yield. It must be added that Wellington, though at the head of a force never superior, very rarely equal in numbers to that of the enemy, never lost a battle; never indeed failed to obtain some decisive advantage. Napoleon, not to mention Leipsic, and the fierce fights of 1814, when he was overpowered by numbers, was undoubtedly beaten at Aspern, cannot be said to have been victorious at Eylau, and even at Wagram and at Borodino inflicted on his foes no greater losses than he himself sustained.

Lastly, if the entire results of the warfare of the two commanders be compared, may it not fairly be contended that he whose rashness often placed him in positions in which success was unattainable; who, having lost the most magnificent army that ever the world beheld, saw himself stripped of all his conquests, losing also even

the throne to which his glory had formerly raised him, cannot be pronounced the equal of him who with one small army delivered two kingdoms from his grasp; who after six campaigns of unvaried toil and hardship, but of equally unvaried success, led that same army to invade his dominions, and to deal the heaviest and most deadly of all the blows inflicted upon his power, and who finally defeated him himself on the only occasion on which he encountered him? If, to adopt the test laid down by Napoleon himself, "the commission "of the fewest faults"* is the great criterion by which we should judge of the merits of a general, then certainly Wellington must be pronounced the equal, and, if the number of his campaigns be taken into consideration, the superior of all the commanders who have ever stood at the head of an army, whether in modern or in ancient ages.

In seeking to form a correct estimate of Wellington's qualities as a statesman we are met at the outset by a difficulty which may be said to be one of his own creation, since, from the very general feeling which inclines the world to deny to any man great eminence in more than one line, the very brilliancy of his military glory has been injurious to his political reputation. Accordingly no part of his civil career has been free from disparaging comment; some attacking him as wholly destitute of political capacity, while others have accused him more loudly and more plausibly, though not more correctly, as guilty of the greatest vacillation and inconsistency. It is certain indeed that we must look at his military and at his civil career from different points of

* Napoleon said to Sir H. Lowe at St. Helena, "In war the game is always with him who commits the fewest faults."—Sir H. Lowe's journal, quoted by Forsyth: Napoleon at St. Helena, i., 140.

view. In the one we admire the pre-eminence of his genius; in the other the pre-eminence of his public virtue. Not indeed that he was destitute of many most statesmanlike talents, or that he has failed to leave behind him a name identified with great services done in peace to his country. His administrative abilities, to whatever department they were applied, were of the very highest order; and the administrative reforms which he carried out are acknowledged, even by his political adversaries,* to have been great and valuable. His foreign policy too was dignified, wise, and dictated by a profound and correct appreciation of the real interest of his country. No statesman ever gave a more conspicuous example of inflexible adherence to the great principle of non-interference with foreign countries than Wellington, when in spite of his contempt for the character, and of his thorough knowledge of the intrigues of Louis Philippe, he at once acknowledged the right of the French to choose him for their king. No one ever dwelt more uniformly on the importance and the duty of preserving peace, or laboured more diligently or more successfully to maintain it. And for this love of peace he is entitled to more emphatic praise than ordinary ministers, because he affords an almost solitary instance of such a feeling being cherished by a great soldier; while even statesmen who never saw a shot fired have not been always able to resist the fascinations of victory and conquest. That illustrious English minister who at the time of Wellington's birth was venerated by the whole world as the greatest of his countrymen, did not scruple to avow himself a "lover of "honourable war." But Wellington, who owed everything to his own military genius, never ceased to deprecate it, to warn his countrymen against it, to denounce

* Vide supra, p. 252.

it as the greatest of calamities, and, when wantonly entered into, as the greatest of crimes.

It is on his opposition to constitutional and commercial reforms that his detractors chiefly found their depreciatory estimate of his sagacity as a statesman; being carried away in some degree by the recollection of their former excitement on those subjects which still hinders them from forming a candid judgment of the past, just as the waves of the sea beat angrily upon the shore after the winds have been lulled which roused them into fury.

It is somewhat singular, when we recollect the acuteness and accuracy of the political foresight which he displayed from the beginning to the end of his Peninsular campaigns, that the same quality should at any moment have deserted him in his own country, and yet to a certain extent this must be admitted to have been the case, though in a far less degree than superficial critics have alleged. If it be urged against him as a fault that he failed to perceive the impossibility of resisting the popular wish for Parliamentary Reform (though we have already shown that the vehemence and constancy of that wish, till it was further inflamed by the Ministry of 1831, has been greatly exaggerated), we may on the other hand fairly claim for him the merit of having in some important respects foreseen the effects of the measure which was carried far more accurately than its authors. If again he be reproached with his persevering advocacy of a protection duty upon corn, it is notorious that in this particular he was in no respect behind any other leading statesman of the kingdom, since it is undeniable that Peel only abandoned it under the apprehension of impending famine, and since it was only the same or a less creditable cause which converted the Whig leaders from an equally

positive maintenance of the principle of protection, though they differed from the Conservatives about the means of securing it. While we certainly cannot say that either on the question of reform or of free trade he was before his age, it is clear that he was not so much behind it as has been frequently asserted.

The charge of inconsistency which has been brought against him, though supported by a reference to his conduct on both these subjects, and also on that of the Catholic question, is even more easily refuted; the truth being, not that he was inconsistent in his adherence to the principles which he laid down as the rules of his conduct, but that the principles themselves were different from those usually adopted by the leaders of parliamentary parties. His doctrine, as he once stated to his brother Peers, was that the government of a nation is usually a choice between evils, or at least between difficulties; and that the task of its governors is to choose the least evil or the least difficult path. And such a doctrine had in the first place an inevitable tendency to lead its holder to occasional changes of action with respect to particular measures, since, in the case of all which are not inherently and intrinsically right or wrong, it is evident that the line of conduct which may be most desirable at one time may be the least advantageous at another. And again this view of affairs was in some degree a stepping-stone to the rule which he laid down for himself, and from which he never deviated, that, as his first duty was obedience to his Sovereign, so to stand by that Sovereign in moments of difficulty was an obligation more imperative than the maintenance of any previously-delivered opinion or of any individual measure whatever.

This principle it was which at first chiefly dictated his opposition to the removal of the Roman Catholic disa-

bilities, since he knew well the strong objection which George IV. entertained to such a measure; and therefore, in spite of the increasing difficulties of the question, he would have thought himself bound to resist its settlement during the lifetime of that Sovereign had not this scruple been outweighed by his apprehensions of a still more formidable evil, a civil war in Ireland. Few will now deny the correctness of his judgment that the result of the Clare election rendered any further delay in the settlement of the question inadmissible; and none can doubt the admirable firmness and ability with which he carried that settlement into effect, though we must ever regret that the same firmness was not displayed in filling up the details of his measure, but that he suffered others to render it imperfect by the omission of any provision for the Roman Catholic priesthood. It was this same principle of obedience to and support of his Sovereign as his first duty which in its fuller development, combined with his other rule of choosing the least of conflicting evils, influenced him when in 1832 he declared his willingness to undertake the conduct of an Administration in order to carry a measure of reform, the dangers of which were in no respect lessened in his eyes; and which made him in 1846 co-operate in carrying the Bill for the repeal of the Corn Laws of which he also dreaded the effects; and even those who most question the propriety of the conduct which he adopted cannot deny the rare disinterestedness and self-denial with which he sacrificed his own most deeply-rooted opinions to what he conceived to be his duty to his Sovereign and to his country. The wisest of uninspired men* has recorded as the highest panegyric of his illustrious friend, who had been twice Prime Minister, and

* Burke's epitaph on Lord Rockingham.

1852.

whose constitutional wisdom had almost preserved to Britain the affection and obedience of her American colonies, that he was especially "worthy of admiration "because he did not live for himself." But to no man that ever lived was such a noble panegyric as applicable as to Wellington, who lived for his King, for his country, and in scarcely a less degree for Europe and the whole world; but who never consulted his own wishes, his personal interests, nor even, if it seemed to interfere with the permanent welfare of his country, his own temporary reputation.

As a speaker he did not aim at any graces of style, which indeed he wholly disregarded in others, declaring on one occasion that eloquent language and carefully-turned phrases "made no impression on his mind;" yet by the confession even of those opposed to him he was a most ready and effective debater,* being possessed of extensive and accurate information on most subjects, and of a clear, logical intellect, which always went straight to, and kept close to the subject of discussion, and detected every endeavour of his antagonists to elude it themselves or to lead others to forget it.

If this be a true estimate of Wellington as a statesman it may be that, though his political talent was greatly inferior to his military genius, still, if it be looked upon as an example to others, his civil career may be even the more valuable, and the more worthy of an attentive consideration. Deeds performed by a military genius of such rare perfection the most ambitious and self-confident may despair of equalling, but actions of resolute virtue are within the reach of all men. It was not to reputation for far-sighted sagacity as a ruler, nor for profound views as a legislator, still less to any

* See Lord Brougham's character of him, 'Sketches of Statesmen of George III.'

commanding eloquence as an orator that Wellington owed that predominant influence over the minds of a large section of his countrymen by which he more than once persuaded them to lay aside long-considered opinions, inveterate prejudices, and even cherished animosities, out of deference to his assertion of what was required by the public good; but to their conviction of his entire sincerity, of his perfect disinterestedness, and of his unalloyed patriotism, which held everything second to the two great principles of rendering loyal obedience to his Sovereign and faithful service to his country.

These qualities, all worthy of our admiration and gratitude as they were in him, are yet attainable by all who will with singleness of mind and honesty of purpose stedfastly devote themselves to their exercise. For those who call themselves his admirers so to devote themselves is the best way of proving the sincerity of the feelings they possess. "The chief duty of friends is "not to follow the dead with unfaithful lamentation, "but to bear in mind what he would have approved, to "act as he would have enjoined."* The best human means of gaining strength of mind and constancy to practise such devotion is to dwell fondly and to ponder seriously on his bright example, that, as the prophet of old by steadily gazing on the way by which his predecessor ascended to heaven obtained a double portion of his spirit, so they and statesmen of future ages by keeping constantly in view the virtues by which Wellington gained his immortality of renown, and the vast services which they enabled him to perform, may learn to emulate those virtues, and perhaps, if occasion should offer, to rival those services.

* Non hoc præcipuum amicorum munus est prosequi defunctum ignavo questu; sed quæ voluerit meminisse, quæ mandaverit ex sequi.—TAC. *Ann.* ii., 71.

APPENDIX.

Copy of a Letter addressed by the late Duke of Wellington to the Rev. W. Hayward Cox, in reply to an appeal made to him by the latter, on behalf of a Committee sitting at Oxford, to withdraw his Grace's pretensions to the University Chancellorship in favour of the late Sir R. Peel.

[The capitals are preserved as in the original.]

Strathfieldsaye, January 18, 1834.

SIR,

I HAVE had the Honor of receiving your Letter of Friday Evening.

There is No Man more sensible than I am of the Talent the Merits and the Claims of Sir Robert Peel upon the Public for his Services; There is no Man who more highly esteems His Character, or is more attached to His Person—and I must add that I consider that he possesses all the Qualifications to entitle him to the Confidence of the University of Oxford as their Chancellor.

It is well known that from the Moment that it was intimated to me that some Persons at Oxford thought of me, as a Candidate for that Office, I have uniformly stated My own feeling that I was not qualified; and that moreover I had not had the advantage of being educated at the University.

I have upon these occasions suggested the Names of others as Candidates for this Honour, and upon the last occasion on which I communicated with the Gentlemen who still thought of Me, that is on the 13th of December I recommended that "the Heads "of the Principal Colleges at Oxford, such as Christ Church, St. "John's, Queen's College, University College, Brazen-Nose, Oriel, "Magdalen, and the leading Members of the Convocation "residing at Oxford, Should agree among themselves as to the "Person whom they should think proper to elect to be the "Chancellor of the University, and then make their wishes "known as a Body to that Person." And I "earnestly recom-

" mended to the University to select a Person who had been " educated at the University."

On the 10th Inst. certain Gentlemen of the University called upon me with a requisition signed by some of those whom I had desired to " agree among themselves as to the Person whom they " should select to be the Chancellor of the University," and they desired that I should be the Person.

I requested them to " reconsider the circumstances of the Uni- " versity, the existence of which had occasioned the communi- " cation to me." I suggested that this " reconsideration might " lead to an Unanimous and Satisfactory Choice." But, in reply to the call made upon me by so many respectable Individuals I stated that " I should not decline to attend to the call of the " University, if I should be the object of such Choice."

The Circumstances referred to have, I understand been reconsidered; and more signatures of some of the most respectable and Influential Persons at Oxford have been added to the List.

Under these Circumstances you have called upon me to decline to be elected, in order to make way for Sir Robert Peel.

The first question would be, would Sir Robert Peel accept a nomination of himself made under such Circumstances?

The Second would the Course proposed by you to me be quite fair towards the Gentlemen, whom I desired to consult, and consider, and reconsider, and who after repeated entreaties on my part that they would choose another Person to be their Chancellor have come again to me; and to whom I have at last answered that if I am the object of their Choice, I would not decline.

I am convinced that after the perusal of this Letter, you will be of opinion that the proposition which you have made to me is inadmissible.

I have the Honor to be your most obedient Humble Servant,

WELLINGTON.

The Rev. W. Hayward Cox,
No. 11 Beaumont-street, Oxford.

NOTE.—The gentlemen who went to the Duke were three parties (friends and connections):—Dr. Gilbert, Head of Brazennose; Dr. Ogilvie, of Balliol, now Prof. Past. Theol. Ch. Ch; Mr. Wintle, Fellow of St. John's, Step Uncle to Dr. Gilbert.—W. H. C.

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